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THE WORKS

OF

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

New Dresden Edition.

The Clergy know, that I know, that they know, that they do not know.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME TWO.

LECTURES.

C. P. FARRELL.

THE INGERSOLL PUBLISHERS, Inc.
NEW YORK CITY.

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1900,
C. P. FARRELL.

TO

MRS. SUE. M. FARRELL,

IN LAW MY SISTER,

AND IN FACT MY FRIEND,

THIS VOLUME,

AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT AND LOVE,

IS DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

FOR many years I have regarded the Pentateuch simply as a record of a barbarous people, in which are found a great number of the ceremonies of savagery, many absurd and unjust laws, and thousands of ideas inconsistent with known and demonstrated facts. To me it seemed almost a crime to teach that this record was written by inspired men; that slavery, polygamy, wars of conquest and extermination were right, and that there was a time when men could win the approbation of infinite Intelligence, Justice, and Mercy, by violating maidens and by butchering babes. To me it seemed more reasonable that savage men had made these laws; and I endeavored in a lecture, entitled "Some Mistakes of Moses," to point out some of the errors,

contradictions, and impossibilities contained in the Pentateuch. The lecture was never written and consequently never delivered twice the same. On several occasions it was reported and published without consent, and without revision. All these publications were grossly and glaringly incorrect. As published, they have been answered several hundred times, and many of the clergy are still engaged in the great work. To keep these reverend gentlemen from wasting their talents on the mistakes of reporters and printers, I concluded to publish the principal points in all my lectures on this subject. And here, it may be proper for me to say, that arguments cannot be answered by personal abuse; that there is no logic in slander, and that falsehood, in the long run, defeats itself. People who love their enemies should, at least, tell the truth about their friends. Should it turn out that I am the worst man in the whole world, the story of the flood will remain just as improbable as before, and the contradictions of the Pentateuch will still demand an explanation.

There was a time when a falsehood, fulminated from the pulpit, smote like a sword ; but, the supply having greatly exceeded the demand, clerical misrepresentation has at last become almost an innocent amusement. Remembering that only a few years ago men, women, and even children, were imprisoned, tortured and burned, for having expressed in an exceedingly mild and gentle way, the ideas entertained by me, I congratulate myself that calumny is now the pulpit's last resort. The old instruments of torture are kept only to gratify curiosity ; the chains are rusting away, and the demolition of time has allowed even the dungeons of the Inquisition to be visited by light. The church, impotent and malicious, regrets, not the abuse, but the loss of her power, and seeks to hold by falsehood what she gained by cruelty and force, by fire and fear. Christianity cannot live in peace with any other form of faith. If that religion be true, there is but one savior, one inspired book, and but one little narrow grass-grown path that leads to heaven. Such a religion is necessarily uncompromising,

unreasoning, aggressive and insolent. Christianity has held all other creeds and forms in infinite contempt, divided the world into enemies and friends, and verified the awful declaration of its founder—a declaration that wet with blood the sword he came to bring, and made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the fagots' flames.

Too great praise challenges attention, and often brings to light a thousand faults that otherwise the general eye would never see. Were we allowed to read the Bible as we do all other books, we would admire its beauties, treasure its worthy thoughts, and account for all its absurd, grotesque and cruel things, by saying that its authors lived in rude, barbaric times. But we are told that it was written by inspired men ; that it contains the will of God ; that it is perfect, pure, and true in all its parts ; the source and standard of all moral and religious truth ; that it is the star and anchor of all human hope ; the only guide for man, the only torch in Nature's night. These claims are so at variance with every known recorded fact, so palpably absurd, that every free,

unbiased soul is forced to raise the standard of revolt.

We read the pagan sacred books with profit and delight. With myth and fable we are ever charmed, and find a pleasure in the endless repetition of the beautiful, poetic, and absurd. We find, in all these records of the past, philosophies and dreams, and efforts stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mystery of life and death, to answer the eternal questions of the Whence and Whither, and vainly sought to make, with bits of shattered glass, a mirror that would, in very truth, reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self.

These myths were born of hopes, and fears, and tears, and smiles, and they were touched and colored by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth, and death's sad night. They clothed even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them, the winds and waves were music, and all the lakes, and streams, and springs,—the mountains, woods and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy

forms. They thrilled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire; made tawny Summer's billowed breast the throne and home of love; filled Autumn's arms with sun-kissed grapes, and gathered sheaves; and pictured Winter as a weak old king who felt, like Lear upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears. These myths, though false, are beautiful, and have for many ages and in countless ways, enriched the heart and kindled thought. But if the world were taught that all these things are true and all inspired of God, and that eternal punishment will be the lot of him who dares deny or doubt, the sweetest myth of all the Fable World would lose its beauty, and become a scorned and hateful thing to every brave and thoughtful man.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *Oct. 7th, 1879.*

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES.

HE WHO ENDEAVORS TO CONTROL THE MIND BY FORCE IS A TYRANT, AND HE WHO SUBMITS IS A SLAVE.

I.

I WANT to do what little I can to make my country truly free, to broaden the intellectual horizon of our people, to destroy the prejudices born of ignorance and fear, to do away with the blind worship of the ignoble past, with the idea that all the great and good are dead, that the living are totally depraved, that all pleasures are sins, that sighs and groans are alone pleasing to God, that thought is dangerous, that intellectual courage is a crime, that cowardice is a virtue, that a certain belief is necessary to secure salvation, that to carry a cross in this world will give us a palm in the next, and that we must allow some priest to be the pilot of our souls.

Until every soul is freely permitted to investigate every book, and creed, and dogma for itself, the world cannot be free. Mankind will be enslaved until there is mental grandeur enough to allow each man to have his thought and say. This earth will be a paradise when men can, upon all these questions differ, and yet grasp each other's hands as friends. It is amazing to me that a difference of opinion upon subjects that we know nothing with certainty about, should make us hate, persecute, and despise each other. Why a difference of opinion upon predestination, or the Trinity, should make people imprison and burn each other seems beyond the comprehension of man; and yet in all countries where Christians have existed, they have destroyed each other to the exact extent of their power. Why should a believer in God hate an atheist? Surely the atheist has not injured God, and surely he is human, capable of joy and pain, and entitled to all the rights of man. Would it not be far better to treat this atheist, at least, as well as he treats us?

Christians tell me that they love their enemies, and yet all I ask is—not that they love their enemies, not that they love their friends even, but that they treat those who differ from them, with simple fairness.

We do not wish to be forgiven, but we wish Christians to so act that we will not have to forgive them.

If all will admit that all have an equal right to think, then the question is forever solved; but as long as organized and powerful churches, pretending to hold the keys of heaven and hell, denounce every person as an outcast and criminal who thinks for himself and denies their authority, the world will be filled with hatred and suffering. To hate man and worship God seems to be the sum of all the creeds.

That which has happened in most countries has happened in ours. When a religion is founded, the educated, the powerful—that is to say, the priests and nobles, tell the ignorant and superstitious—that is to say, the people, that the religion of their country was given to their fathers by God himself; that it is the only true religion; that all others were conceived in falsehood and brought forth in fraud, and that all who believe in the true religion will be happy forever, while all others will burn in hell. For the purpose of governing the people, that is to say, for the purpose of being supported by the people, the priests and nobles declare this religion to be sacred, and that whoever adds to, or takes from it, will be

burned here by man, and hereafter by God. The result of this is, that the priests and nobles will not allow the people to change; and when, after a time, the priests, having intellectually advanced, wish to take a step in the direction of progress, the people will not allow them to change. At first, the rabble are enslaved by the priests, and afterwards the rabble become the masters.

One of the first things I wish to do, is to free the orthodox clergy. I am a great friend of theirs, and in spite of all they may say against me, I am going to do them a great and lasting service. Upon their necks are visible the marks of the collar, and upon their backs those of the lash. They are not allowed to read and think for themselves. They are taught like parrots, and the best are those who repeat, with the fewest mistakes, the sentences they have been taught. They sit like owls upon some dead limb of the tree of knowledge, and hoot the same old hoots that have been hooted for eighteen hundred years. Their congregations are not grand enough, nor sufficiently civilized, to be willing that the poor preachers shall think for themselves. They are not employed for that purpose. Investigation is regarded as a dangerous experiment, and the ministers are

warned that none of that kind of work will be tolerated. They are notified to stand by the old creed, and to avoid all original thought, as a mortal pestilence. Every minister is employed like an attorney—either for plaintiff or defendant,—and he is expected to be true to his client. If he changes his mind, he is regarded as a deserter, and denounced, hated, and slandered accordingly. Every orthodox clergyman agrees not to change. He contracts not to find new facts, and makes a bargain that he will deny them if he does. Such is the position of a Protestant minister in this nineteenth century. His condition excites my pity; and to better it, I am going to do what little I can.

Some of the clergy have the independence to break away, and the intellect to maintain themselves as free men, but the most are compelled to submit to the dictation of the orthodox, and the dead. They are not employed to give their thoughts, but simply to repeat the ideas of others. They are not expected to give even the doubts that may suggest themselves, but are required to walk in the narrow, verdureless path trodden by the ignorance of the past. The forests and fields on either side are nothing to them. They must not even look at the purple hills, for

pause to hear the babble of the brooks. They must remain in the dusty road where the guide-boards are. They must confine themselves to the "fall of man," the expulsion from the garden, the "scheme of salvation," the "second birth," the atonement, the happiness of the redeemed, and the misery of the lost. They must be careful not to express any new ideas upon these great questions. It is much safer for them to quote from the works of the dead. The more vividly they describe the sufferings of the unregenerate, of those who attended theatres and balls, and drank wine in summer gardens on the Sabbath-day, and laughed at priests, the better ministers they are supposed to be. They must show that misery fits the good for heaven, while happiness prepares the bad for hell; that the wicked get all their good things in this life, and the good all their evil; that in this world God punishes the people he loves, and in the next, the ones he hates; that happiness makes us bad here, but not in heaven; that pain makes us good here, but not in hell. No matter how absurd these things may appear to the carnal mind, they must be preached and they must be believed. If they were reasonable, there would be no virtue in believing. Even the publicans and sin-

ners believe reasonable things. To believe without evidence, or in spite of it, is accounted as righteousness to the sincere and humble Christian.

The ministers are in duty bound to denounce all intellectual pride, and show that we are never quite so dear to God as when we admit that we are poor, corrupt and idiotic worms; that we never should have been born; that we ought to be damned without the least delay; that we are so infamous that we like to enjoy ourselves; that we love our wives and children better than our God; that we are generous only because we are vile; that we are honest from the meanest motives, and that sometimes we have fallen so low that we have had doubts about the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures. In short, they are expected to denounce all pleasant paths and rustling trees, to curse the grass and flowers, and glorify the dust and weeds. They are expected to malign the wicked people in the green and happy fields, who sit and laugh beside the gurgling springs or climb the hills and wander as they will. They are expected to point out the dangers of freedom, the safety of implicit obedience, and to show the wickedness of philosophy, the goodness of faith, the immorality of science and the purity of ignorance.

Now and then a few pious people discover some young man of a religious turn of mind and a consumptive habit of body, not quite sickly enough to die, nor healthy enough to be wicked. The idea occurs to them that he would make a good orthodox minister. They take up a contribution, and send the young man to some theological school where he can be taught to repeat a creed and despise reason. Should it turn out that the young man had some mind of his own, and, after graduating, should change his opinions and preach a different doctrine from that taught in the school, every man who contributed a dollar towards his education would feel that he had been robbed, and would denounce him as a dishonest and ungrateful wretch.

The pulpit should not be a pillory. Congregations should allow the minister a little liberty. They should, at least, permit him to tell the truth.

They have, in Massachusetts, at a place called Andover, a kind of minister factory, where each professor takes an oath once in five years—that time being considered the life of an oath—that he has not, during the last five years, and will not, during the next five years, intellectually advance. There is probably no oath that they could easier keep. Prob-

ably, since the foundation stone of that institution was laid there has not been a single case of perjury. The old creed is still taught. They still insist that God is infinitely wise, powerful and good, and that all men are totally depraved. They insist that the best man God ever made, deserved to be damned the moment he was finished. Andover puts its brand upon every minister it turns out, the same as Sheffield and Birmingham brand their wares, and all who see the brand know exactly what the minister believes, the books he has read, the arguments he relies on, and just what he intellectually is. They know just what he can be depended on to preach, and that he will continue to shrink and shrivel, and grow solemnly stupid day by day until he reaches the Andover of the grave and becomes truly orthodox forever.

I have not singled out the Andover factory because it is worse than the others. They are all about the same. The professors, for the most part, are ministers who failed in the pulpit and were retired to the seminary on account of their deficiency in reason and their excess of faith. As a rule, they know nothing of this world, and far less of the next; but they have the power of stating the most absurd

propositions with faces solemn as stupidity touched by fear.

Something should be done for the liberation of these men. They should be allowed to grow—to have sunlight and air. They should no longer be chained and tied to confessions of faith, to mouldy books and musty creeds. Thousands of ministers are anxious to give their honest thoughts. The hands of wives and babes now stop their mouths. They must have bread, and so the husbands and fathers are forced to preach a doctrine that they hold in scorn. For the sake of shelter, food and clothes, they are obliged to defend the childish miracles of the past, and denounce the sublime discoveries of to-day. They are compelled to attack all modern thought, to point out the dangers of science, the wickedness of investigation and the corrupting influence of logic. It is for them to show that virtue rests upon ignorance and faith, while vice impudently feeds and fattens upon fact and demonstration. It is a part of their business to malign and vilify the Voltaires, Humes, Paines, Humboldts, Tyndalls, Haeckels, Darwins, Spencers, and Drapers, and to bow with uncovered heads before the murderers, adulterers, and persecutors of the world. They are, for the

most part, engaged in poisoning the minds of the young, prejudicing children against science, teaching the astronomy and geology of the Bible, and inducing all to desert the sublime standard of reason.

These orthodox ministers do not add to the sum of knowledge. They produce nothing. They live upon alms. They hate laughter and joy. They officiate at weddings, sprinkle water upon babes, and utter meaningless words and barren promises above the dead. They laugh at the agony of unbelievers, mock at their tears, and of their sorrows make a jest. There are some noble exceptions. Now and then a pulpit holds a brave and honest man. Their congregations are willing that they should think—willing that their ministers should have a little freedom.

As we become civilized, more and more liberty will be accorded to these men, until finally ministers will give their best and highest thoughts. The congregations will finally get tired of hearing about the patriarchs and saints, the miracles and wonders, and will insist upon knowing something about the men and women of our day, and the accomplishments and discoveries of our time. They will finally insist upon knowing how to escape the evils of this world instead of the next. They will ask light upon the

enigmas of this life. They will wish to know what we shall do with our criminals instead of what God will do with his—how we shall do away with beggary and want—with crime and misery—with prostitution, disease and famine,—with tyranny in all its cruel forms—with prisons and scaffolds, and how we shall reward the honest workers, and fill the world with happy homes! These are the problems for the pulpits and congregations of an enlightened future. If Science cannot finally answer these questions, it is a vain and worthless thing.

The clergy, however, will continue to answer them in the old way, until their congregations are good enough to set them free. They will still talk about believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as though that were the only remedy for all human ills. They will still teach that retrogression is the only path that leads to light; that we must go back, that faith is the only sure guide, and that reason is a delusive glare, lighting only the road to eternal pain.

Until the clergy are free they cannot be intellectually honest. We can never tell what they really believe until they know that they can safely speak. They console themselves now by a secret resolution to be as liberal as they dare, with the hope that they

can finally educate their congregations to the point of allowing them to think a little for themselves. They hardly know what they ought to do. The best part of their lives has been wasted in studying subjects of no possible value. Most of them are married, have families, and know but one way of making their living. Some of them say that if they do not preach these foolish dogmas, others will, and that they may through fear, after all, restrain mankind. Besides, they hate publicly to admit that they are mistaken, that the whole thing is a delusion, that the "scheme of salvation" is absurd, and that the Bible is no better than some other books, and worse than most.

You can hardly expect a bishop to leave his palace, or the pope to vacate the Vatican. As long as people want popes, plenty of hypocrites will be found to take the place. And as long as labor fatigues, there will be found a good many men willing to preach once a week, if other folks will work and give them bread. In other words, while the demand lasts, the supply will never fail.

If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish—if a little more enlightened, religion would perish!

II.

FREE SCHOOLS.

It is also my desire to free the schools. When a professor in a college finds a fact, he should make it known, even if it is inconsistent with something Moses said. Public opinion must not compel the professor to hide a fact, and, "like the base Indian, throw the pearl away." With the single exception of Cornell, there is not a college in the United States where truth has ever been a welcome guest. The moment one of the teachers denies the inspiration of the Bible, he is discharged. If he discovers a fact inconsistent with that book, so much the worse for the fact, and especially for the discoverer of the fact. He must not corrupt the minds of his pupils with demonstrations. He must beware of every truth that cannot, in some way be made to harmonize with the superstitions of the Jews. Science has nothing in common with religion. Facts and miracles never

did, and never will agree. They are not in the least related. They are deadly foes. What has religion to do with facts? Nothing. Can there be Methodist mathematics, Catholic astronomy, Presbyterian geology, Baptist biology, or Episcopal botany? Why, then, should a sectarian college exist? Only that which somebody knows should be taught in our schools. We should not collect taxes to pay people for guessing. The common school is the bread of life for the people, and it should not be touched by the withering hand of superstition.

Our country will never be filled with great institutions of learning until there is an absolute divorce between Church and School. As long as the mutilated records of a barbarous people are placed by priest and professor above the reason of mankind, we shall reap but little benefit from church or school.

Instead of dismissing professors for finding something out, let us rather discharge those who do not. Let each teacher understand that investigation is not dangerous for him; that his bread is safe, no matter how much truth he may discover, and that his salary will not be reduced, simply because he finds that the ancient Jews did not know the entire history of the world.

Besides, it is not fair to make the Catholic support a Protestant school, nor is it just to collect taxes from infidels and atheists to support schools in which any system of religion is taught.

The sciences are not sectarian. People do not persecute each other on account of disagreements in mathematics. Families are not divided about botany, and astronomy does not even tend to make a man hate his father and mother. It is what people do not know, that they persecute each other about. Science will bring, not a sword, but peace.

Just as long as religion has control of the schools, science will be an outcast. Let us free our institutions of learning. Let us dedicate them to the science of eternal truth. Let us tell every teacher to ascertain all the facts he can—to give us light, to follow Nature, no matter where she leads; to be infinitely true to himself and us; to feel that he is without a chain, except the obligation to be honest; that he is bound by no books, by no creed, neither by the sayings of the dead nor of the living; that he is asked to look with his own eyes, to reason for himself without fear, to investigate in every possible direction, and to bring us the fruit of all his work.

At present, a good many men engaged in scientific pursuits, and who have signally failed in gaining recognition among their fellows, are endeavoring to make reputations among the churches by delivering weak and vapid lectures upon the "harmony of Genesis and Geology." Like all hypocrites, these men overstate the case to such a degree, and so turn and pervert facts and words that they succeed only in gaining the applause of other hypocrites like themselves. Among the great scientists they are regarded as generals regard sutlers who trade with both armies.

Surely the time must come when the wealth of the world will not be wasted in the propagation of ignorant creeds and miraculous mistakes. The time must come when churches and cathedrals will be dedicated to the use of man; when minister and priest will deem the discoveries of the living of more importance than the errors of the dead; when the truths of Nature will outrank the "sacred" falsehoods of the past, and when a single fact will outweigh all the miracles of Holy Writ.

Who can over estimate the progress of the world if all the money wasted in superstition could be used to enlighten, elevate and civilize mankind?

When every church becomes a school, every cathedral a university, every clergyman a teacher, and all their hearers brave and honest thinkers, then, and not until then, will the dream of poet, patriot, philanthropist and philosopher, become a real and blessed truth.

III

THE POLITICIANS.

I WOULD like also to liberate the politician. At present, the successful office-seeker is a good deal like the centre of the earth; he weighs nothing himself, but draws everything else to him. There are so many societies, so many churches, so many isms, that it is almost impossible for an independent man to succeed in a political career. Candidates are forced to pretend that they are Catholics with Protestant proclivities, or Christians with liberal tendencies, or temperance men who now and then take a glass of wine, or, that although not members of any church their wives are, and that they subscribe liberally to all. The result of all this is that we reward hypocrisy and elect men entirely destitute of real principle; and this will never change until the people become grand enough to allow each other to do their own thinking.

Our Government should be entirely and purely secular. The religious views of a candidate should be kept entirely out of sight. He should not be compelled to give his opinion as to the inspiration of the Bible, the propriety of infant baptism, or the immaculate conception. All these things are private and personal. He should be allowed to settle such things for himself, and should he decide contrary to the law and will of God, let him settle the matter with God. The people ought to be wise enough to select as their officers men who know something of political affairs, who comprehend the present greatness, and clearly perceive the future grandeur of our country. If we were in a storm at sea, with deck wave-washed and masts strained and bent with storm, and it was necessary to reef the top sail, we certainly would not ask the brave sailor who volunteered to go aloft, what his opinion was on the five points of Calvinism. Our Government has nothing to do with religion. It is neither Christian nor pagan; it is secular. But as long as the people persist in voting for or against men on account of their religious views, just so long will hypocrisy hold place and power. Just so long will the candidates crawl in the dust—hide their opinions, flatter those with whom

they differ, pretend to agree with those whom they despise; and just so long will honest men be trampled under foot. Churches are becoming political organizations. Nearly every Catholic is a Democrat; nearly every Methodist in the North is a Republican.

It probably will not be long until the churches will divide as sharply upon political, as upon theological questions; and when that day comes, if there are not liberals enough to hold the balance of power, this Government will be destroyed. The liberty of man is not safe in the hands of any church. Wherever the Bible and sword are in partnership, man is a slave.

All laws for the purpose of making man worship God, are born of the same spirit that kindled the fires of the *auto da fe*, and lovingly built the dungeons of the Inquisition. All laws defining and punishing blasphemy—making it a crime to give your honest ideas about the Bible, or to laugh at the ignorance of the ancient Jews, or to enjoy yourself on the Sabbath, or to give your opinion of Jehovah, were passed by impudent bigots, and should be at once repealed by honest men. An infinite God ought to be able to protect himself, without going in

partnership with State Legislatures. Certainly he ought not so to act that laws become necessary to keep him from being laughed at. No one thinks of protecting Shakespeare from ridicule, by the threat of fine and imprisonment. It strikes me that God might write a book that would not necessarily excite the laughter of his children. In fact, I think it would be safe to say that a real God could produce a work that would excite the admiration of mankind. Surely politicians could be better employed than in passing laws to protect the literary reputation of the Jewish God.

IV.

MAN AND WOMAN.

LET us forget that we are Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, or Freethinkers, and remember only that we are men and women. After all, *man* and *woman* are the highest possible titles. All other names belittle us, and show that we have, to a certain extent, given up our individuality, and have consented to wear the collar of authority—that we are followers. Throwing away these names, let us examine these questions not as partisans, but as human beings with hopes and fears in common.

We know that our opinions depend, to a great degree, upon our surroundings—upon race, country, and education. We are all the result of numberless conditions, and inherit vices and virtues, truths and prejudices. If we had been born in England, surrounded by wealth and clothed with power, most of

us would have been Episcopalians, and believed in church and state. We should have insisted that the people needed a religion, and that not having intellect enough to provide one for themselves, it was our duty to make one for them, and then compel them to support it. We should have believed it indecent to officiate in a pulpit without wearing a gown, and that prayers should be read from a book. Had we belonged to the lower classes, we might have been dissenters and protested against the mummeries of the High Church. Had we been born in Turkey, most of us would have been Mohammedans and believed in the inspiration of the Koran. We should have believed that Mohammed actually visited heaven and became acquainted with an angel by the name of Gabriel, who was so broad between the eyes that it required three hundred days for a very smart camel to travel the distance. If some man had denied this story we should probably have denounced him as a dangerous person, one who was endeavoring to undermine the foundations of society, and to destroy all distinction between virtue and vice. We should have said to him, "What do you propose to give us in place of that angel? We cannot afford to give up an angel of that size for nothing." We

would have insisted that the best and wisest men believed the Koran. We would have quoted from the works and letters of philosophers, generals and sultans, to show that the Koran was the best of books, and that Turkey was indebted to that book and to that alone for its greatness and prosperity. We would have asked that man whether he knew more than all the great minds of his country, whether he was so much wiser than his fathers? We would have pointed out to him the fact that thousands had been consoled in the hour of death by passages from the Koran; that they had died with glazed eyes brightened by visions of the heavenly harem, and gladly left this world of grief and tears. We would have regarded Christians as the vilest of men, and on all occasions would have repeated "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet!"

So, if we had been born in India, we should in all probability have believed in the religion of that country. We should have regarded the old records as true and sacred, and looked upon a wandering priest as better than the men from whom he begged, and by whose labor he lived. We should have believed in a god with three heads instead of three gods with one head, as we do now.

Now and then some one says that the religion of his father and mother is good enough for him, and wonders why anybody should desire a better. Surely we are not bound to follow our parents in religion any more than in politics, science or art. China has been petrified by the worship of ancestors. If our parents had been satisfied with the religion of theirs, we would be still less advanced than we are. If we are, in any way, bound by the belief of our fathers, the doctrine will hold good back to the first people who had a religion; and if this doctrine is true, we ought now to be believers in that first religion. In other words, we would all be barbarians. You cannot show real respect to your parents by perpetuating their errors. Good fathers and mothers wish their children to advance, to overcome obstacles which baffled them, and to correct the errors of their education. If you wish to reflect credit upon your parents, accomplish more than they did, solve problems that they could not understand, and build better than they knew. To sacrifice your manhood upon the grave of your father is an honor to neither. Why should a son who has examined a subject, throw away his reason and adopt the views of his mother? Is not such a course dishonorable to both?

We must remember that this "ancestor" argument is as old at least as the second generation of men, that it has served no purpose except to enslave mankind, and results mostly from the fact that acquiescence is easier than investigation. This argument pushed to its logical conclusion, would prevent the advance of all people whose parents were not Freethinkers.

It is hard for many people to give up the religion in which they were born; to admit that their fathers were utterly mistaken, and that the sacred records of their country are but collections of myths and fables.

But when we look for a moment at the world, we find that each nation has its "sacred records"—its religion, and its ideas of worship. Certainly all cannot be right; and as it would require a life time to investigate the claims of these various systems, it is hardly fair to damn a man forever, simply because he happens to believe the wrong one. All these religions were produced by barbarians. Civilized nations have contented themselves with changing the religions of their barbaric ancestors, but they have made none. Nearly all these religions are intensely selfish. Each one was made by some con-

temptible little nation that regarded itself as of almost infinite importance, and looked upon the other nations as beneath the notice of their god. In all these countries it was a crime to deny the sacred records, to laugh at the priests, to speak disrespectfully of the gods, to fail to divide your substance with the lazy hypocrites who managed your affairs in the next world upon condition that you would support them in this. In the olden time these theological people who quartered themselves upon the honest and industrious, were called soothsayers, seers, charmers, prophets, enchanters, sorcerers, wizards, astrologers, and impostors, but now, they are known as clergymen.

We are no exception to the general rule, and consequently have our sacred books as well as the rest. Of course, it is claimed by many of our people that our books are the only true ones, the only ones that the real God ever wrote, or had anything whatever to do with. They insist that all other sacred books were written by hypocrites and impostors; that the Jews were the only people that God ever had any personal intercourse with, and that all other prophets and seers were inspired only by impudence and mendacity. True, it seems somewhat

strange that God should have chosen a barbarous and unknown people who had little or nothing to do with the other nations of the earth, as his messengers to the rest of mankind.

It is not easy to account for an infinite God making people so low in the scale of intellect as to require a revelation. Neither is it easy to perceive why, if a revelation was necessary for all, it was made only to a few. Of course, I know that it is extremely wicked to suggest these thoughts, and that ignorance is the only armor that can effectually protect you from the wrath of God. I am aware that investigators with all their genius, never find the road to heaven; that those who look where they are going are sure to miss it, and that only those who voluntarily put out their eyes and implicitly depend upon blindness can surely keep the narrow path.

Whoever reads our sacred book is compelled to believe it or suffer forever the torments of the lost. We are told that we have the privilege of examining it for ourselves; but this privilege is only extended to us on the condition that we believe it whether it appears reasonable or not. We may disagree with others as much as we please upon the meaning of

all passages in the Bible, but we must not deny the truth of a single word. We must believe that the book is inspired. If we obey its every precept without believing in its inspiration we will be damned just as certainly as though we disobeyed its every word. We have no right to weigh it in the scales of reason—to test it by the laws of nature, or the facts of observation and experience. To do this, we are told, is to put ourselves above the word of God, and sit in judgment on the works of our creator.

For my part, I cannot admit that belief is a voluntary thing. It seems to me that evidence, even in spite of ourselves, will have its weight, and that whatever our wish may be, we are compelled to stand with fairness by the scales, and give the exact result. It will not do to say that we reject the Bible because we are wicked. Our wickedness must be ascertained not from our belief but from our acts.

I am told by the clergy that I ought not to attack the Bible; that I am leading thousands to perdition and rendering certain the damnation of my own soul. They have had the kindness to advise me that, if my object is to make converts, I am pursuing the wrong course. They tell me to use gentler expressions,

and more cunning words. Do they really wish me to make more converts? If their advice is honest, they are traitors to their trust. If their advice is not honest, then they are unfair with me. Certainly they should wish me to pursue the course that will make the fewest converts, and yet they pretend to tell me how my influence could be increased. It may be, that upon this principle John Bright advises America to adopt free trade, so that our country can become a successful rival of Great Britain. Sometimes I think that even ministers are not entirely candid.

Notwithstanding the advice of the clergy, I have concluded to pursue my own course, to tell my honest thoughts, and to have my freedom in this world whatever my fate may be in the next.

The real oppressor, enslaver and corrupter of the people is the Bible. That book is the chain that binds, the dungeon that holds the clergy. That book spreads the pall of superstition over the colleges and schools. That book puts out the eyes of science, and makes honest investigation a crime. That book unmans the politician and degrades the people. That book fills the world with bigotry, hypocrisy and fear. It plays the same part in our country

that has been played by "sacred records" in all the nations of the world.

A little while ago I saw one of the Bibles of the Middle Ages. It was about two feet in length, and one and a half in width. It had immense oaken covers, with hasps, and clasps, and hinges large enough almost for the doors of a penitentiary. It was covered with pictures of winged angels and aureoled saints. In my imagination I saw this book carried to the cathedral altar in solemn pomp—heard the chant of robed and kneeling priests, felt the strange tremor of the organ's peal; saw the colored light streaming through windows stained and touched by blood and flame—the swinging censer with its perfumed incense rising to the mighty roof, dim with height and rich with legend carved in stone, while on the walls was hung, written in light, and shade, and all the colors that can tell of joy and tears, the pictured history of the martyred Christ. The people fell upon their knees. The book was opened, and the priest read the messages from God to man. To the multitude, the book itself was evidence enough that it was not the work of human hands. How could those little marks and lines and dots contain, like tombs, the thoughts of men, and how could they, touched by a

ray of light from human eyes, give up their dead? How could these characters span the vast chasm dividing the present from the past, and make it possible for the living still to hear the voices of the dead?

V.

THE PENTATEUCH.

THE first five books in our Bible are known as the Pentateuch. For a long time it was supposed that Moses was the author, and among the ignorant the supposition still prevails. As a matter of fact, it seems to be well settled that Moses had nothing to do with these books, and that they were not written until he had been dust and ashes for hundreds of years. But, as all the churches still insist that he was the author, that he wrote even an account of his own death and burial, let us speak of him as though these books were in fact written by him. As the Christians maintain that God was the real author, it makes but little difference whom he employed as his pen, or clerk.

Nearly all authors of sacred books have given an account of the creation of the universe, the origin of matter, and the destiny of the human race. Nearly

all have pointed out the obligation that man is under to his creator for having placed him upon the earth, and allowed him to live and suffer, and have taught that nothing short of the most abject worship could possibly compensate God for his trouble and labor suffered and done for the good of man. They have nearly all insisted that we should thank God for all that is good in life; but they have not all informed us as to whom we should hold responsible for the evils we endure.

Moses differed from most of the makers of sacred books by his failure to say anything of a future life, by failing to promise heaven, and to threaten hell. Upon the subject of a future state, there is not one word in the Pentateuch. Probably at that early day God did not deem it important to make a revelation as to the eternal destiny of man. He seems to have thought that he could control the Jews, at least, by rewards and punishments in this world, and so he kept the frightful realities of eternal joy and torment a profound secret from the people of his choice. He thought it far more important to tell the Jews their origin than to enlighten them as to their destiny.

We must remember that every tribe and nation has some way in which, the more striking phenomena

of nature are accounted for. These accounts are handed down by tradition, changed by numberless narrators as intelligence increases, or to account for newly discovered facts, or for the purpose of satisfying the appetite for the marvelous.

The way in which a tribe or nation accounts for day and night, the change of seasons, the fall of snow and rain, the flight of birds, the origin of the rainbow, the peculiarities of animals, the dreams of sleep, the visions of the insane, the existence of earthquakes, volcanoes, storms, lightning and the thousand things that attract the attention and excite the wonder, fear or admiration of mankind, may be called the philosophy of that tribe or nation. And as all phenomena are, by savage and barbaric man accounted for as the action of intelligent beings for the accomplishment of certain objects, and as these beings were supposed to have the power to assist or injure man, certain things were supposed necessary for man to do in order to gain the assistance, and avoid the anger of these gods. Out of this belief grew certain ceremonies, and these ceremonies united with the belief, formed religion; and consequently every religion has for its foundation a misconception of the cause of phenomena.

All worship is necessarily based upon the belief that some being exists who can, if he will, change the natural order of events. The savage prays to a stone that he calls a god, while the Christian prays to a god that he calls a spirit, and the prayers of both are equally useful. The savage and the Christian put behind the Universe an intelligent cause, and this cause whether represented by one god or many, has been, in all ages, the object of all worship. To carry a fetich, to utter a prayer, to count beads, to abstain from food, to sacrifice a lamb, a child or an enemy, are simply different ways by which the accomplishment of the same object is sought, and are all the offspring of the same error.

Many systems of religion must have existed many ages before the art of writing was discovered, and must have passed through many changes before the stories, miracles, histories, prophecies and mistakes became fixed and petrified in written words. After that, change was possible only by giving new meanings to old words, a process rendered necessary by the continual acquisition of facts somewhat inconsistent with a literal interpretation of the "sacred records." In this way an honest faith often prolongs

its life by dishonest methods; and in this way the Christians of to-day are trying to harmonize the Mosaic account of creation with the theories and discoveries of modern science.

Admitting that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, or that he gave to the Jews a religion, the question arises as to where he obtained his information. We are told by the theologians that he received his knowledge from God, and that every word he wrote was and is the exact truth. It is admitted at the same time that he was an adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and enjoyed the rank and privilege of a prince. Under such circumstances, he must have been well acquainted with the literature, philosophy and religion of the Egyptians, and must have known what they believed and taught as to the creation of the world.

Now, if the account of the origin of this earth as given by Moses is substantially like that given by the Egyptians, then we must conclude that he learned it from them. Should we imagine that he was divinely inspired because he gave to the Jews what the Egyptians had given him?

The Egyptian priests taught *first*, that a god created the original matter, leaving it in a state of

chaos; *second*, that a god moulded it into form; *third*, that the breath of a god moved upon the face of the deep; *fourth*, that a god created simply by saying "Let it be;" *fifth*, that a god created light before the sun existed.

Nothing can be clearer than that Moses received from the Egyptians the principal parts of his narrative, making such changes and additions as were necessary to satisfy the peculiar superstitions of his own people.

If some man at the present day should assert that he had received from God the theories of evolution, the survival of the fittest, and the law of heredity, and we should afterwards find that he was not only an Englishman, but had lived in the family of Charles Darwin, we certainly would account for his having these theories in a natural way, So, if Darwin himself should pretend that he was inspired, and had obtained his peculiar theories from God, we should probably reply that his grandfather suggested the same ideas, and that Lamarck published substantially the same theories the same year that Mr. Darwin was born.

Now, if we have sufficient courage, we will, by the same course of reasoning, account for the story

of creation found in the Bible. We will say that it contains the belief of Moses, and that he received his information from the Egyptians, and not from God. If we take the account as the absolute truth and use it for the purpose of determining the value of modern thought, scientific advancement becomes impossible. And even if the account of the creation as given by Moses should turn out to be true, and should be so admitted by all the scientific world, the claim that he was inspired would still be without the least particle of proof. We would be forced to admit that he knew more than we had supposed. It certainly is no proof that a man is inspired simply because he is right.

No one pretends that Shakespeare was inspired, and yet all the writers of the books of the Old Testament put together, could not have produced Hamlet.

Why should we, looking upon some rough and awkward thing, or god in stone, say that it must have been produced by some inspired sculptor, and with the same breath pronounce the *Venus de Milo* to be the work of man? Why should we, looking at some ancient daub of angel, saint or virgin, say its painter must have been assisted by a god?

Let us account for all we see by the facts we know. If there are things for which we cannot account, let us wait for light. To account for anything by supernatural agencies is, in fact to say that we do not know. Theology is not what we know about God, but what we do not know about Nature. In order to increase our respect for the Bible, it became necessary for the priests to exalt and extol that book, and at the same time to decry and belittle the reasoning powers of man. The whole power of the pulpit has been used for hundreds of years to destroy the confidence of man in himself—to induce him to distrust his own powers of thought, to believe that he was wholly unable to decide any question for himself, and that all human virtue consists in faith and obedience. The church has said, "Believe, and obey! If you reason, you will become an unbeliever, and unbelievers will be lost. If you disobey, you will do so through vain pride and curiosity, and will, like Adam and Eve, be thrust from Paradise forever!"

For my part, I care nothing for what the church says, except in so far as it accords with my reason; and the Bible is nothing to me, only in so far as it agrees with what I think or know.

All books should be examined in the same spirit, and truth should be welcomed and falsehood exposed, no matter in what volume they may be found.

Let us in this spirit examine the Peutateuch; and if anything appears unreasonable, contradictory or absurd, let us have the honesty and courage to admit it. Certainly no good can result either from deceiving ourselves or others. Many millions have implicitly believed this book, and have just as implicitly believed that polygamy was sanctioned by God. Millions have regarded this book as the foundation of all human progress, and at the same time looked upon slavery as a divine institution. Millions have declared this book to have been infinitely holy, and to prove that they were right, have imprisoned, robbed and burned their fellow-men. The inspiration of this book has been established by famine, sword and fire, by dungeon, chain and whip, by dagger and by rack, by force and fear and fraud, and generations have been frightened by threats of hell, and bribed with promises of heaven.

Let us examine a portion of this book, not in the darkness of our fear, but in the light of reason.

And first, let us examine the account given of the creation of this world, commenced, according to the Bible, on Monday morning about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago.

VI.

MONDAY.

MOSES commences his story by telling us that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

If this means anything, it means that God produced, caused to exist, called into being, the heaven and the earth. It will not do to say that he formed the heaven and the earth of previously existing matter. Moses conveys, and intended to convey the idea that the matter of which the heaven and the earth are composed, was created.

It is impossible for me to conceive of something being created from nothing. Nothing, regarded in the light of a raw material, is a decided failure. I cannot conceive of matter apart from force. Neither is it possible to think of force disconnected with matter. You cannot imagine matter going back to absolute nothing. Neither can you imagine nothing being changed into something. You may be eternally damned if you do not say that you can conceive these things, but you cannot conceive them.

Such is the constitution of the human mind that it cannot even think of a commencement or an end of matter, or force.

If God created the universe, there was a time when he commenced to create. Back of that commencement there must have been an eternity. In that eternity what was this God doing? He certainly did not think. There was nothing to think about. He did not remember. Nothing had ever happened. What did he do? Can you imagine anything more absurd than an infinite intelligence in infinite nothing wasting an eternity?

I do not pretend to tell how all these things really are; but I do insist that a statement that cannot possibly be comprehended by any human being, and that appears utterly impossible, repugnant to every fact of experience, and contrary to everything that we really know, must be rejected by every honest man.

We can conceive of eternity, because we cannot conceive of a cessation of time. We can conceive of infinite space because we cannot conceive of so much matter that our imagination will not stand upon the farthest star, and see infinite space beyond. In other words, we cannot conceive of a cessation of time;

therefore eternity is a necessity of the mind. Eternity sustains the same relation to time that space does to matter.

In the time of Moses, it was perfectly safe for him to write an account of the creation of the world. He had simply to put in form the crude notions of the people. At that time, no other Jew could have written a better account. Upon that subject he felt at liberty to give his imagination full play. There was no one who could authoritatively contradict anything he might say. It was substantially the same story that had been imprinted in curious characters upon the clay records of Babylon, the gigantic monuments of Egypt, and the gloomy temples of India. In those days there was an almost infinite difference between the educated and ignorant. The people were controlled almost entirely by signs and wonders. By the lever of fear, priests moved the world. The sacred records were made and kept, and altered by them. The people could not read, and looked upon one who could, as almost a god. In our day it is hard to conceive of the influence of an educated class in a barbarous age. It was only necessary to produce the "sacred record," and ignorance fell upon its face. The people were taught

that the record was inspired, and therefore true. They were not taught that it was true, and therefore inspired.

After all, the real question is not whether the Bible is inspired, but whether it is true. If it is true, it does not need to be inspired. If it is true, it makes no difference whether it was written by a man or a god. The multiplication table is just as useful, just as true as though God had arranged the figures himself. If the Bible is really true, the claim of inspiration need not be urged; and if it is not true, its inspiration can hardly be established. As a matter of fact, the truth does not need to be inspired. Nothing needs inspiration except a falsehood or a mistake. Where truth ends, where probability stops, inspiration begins. A fact never went into partnership with a miracle. Truth does not need the assistance of miracle. A fact will fit every other fact in the Universe, because it is the product of all other facts. A lie will fit nothing except another lie made for the express purpose of fitting it. After a while the man gets tired of lying, and then the last lie will not fit the next fact, and then there is an opportunity to use a miracle. Just at that point, it is necessary to have a little inspiration.

It seems to me that reason is the highest attribute of man, and that if there can be any communication from God to man, it must be addressed to his reason. It does not seem possible that in order to understand a message from God it is absolutely essential to throw our reason away. How could God make known his will to any being destitute of reason? How can any man accept as a revelation from God that which is unreasonable to him? God cannot make a revelation to another man for me. He must make it to me, and until he convinces my reason that it is true, I cannot receive it.

The statement that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, I cannot accept. It is contrary to my reason, and I cannot believe it. It appears reasonable to me that force has existed from eternity. Force cannot, as it appears to me, exist apart from matter. Force, in its nature, is forever active, and without matter it could not act; and so I think matter must have existed forever. To conceive of matter without force, or of force without matter, or of a time when neither existed, or of a being who existed for an eternity without either, and who out of nothing created both, is to me utterly impossible. I may be damned on this

account, but I cannot help it. In my judgment, Moses was mistaken.

It will not do to say that Moses merely intended to tell what God did, in making the heavens and the earth out of matter then in existence. He distinctly states that in the *beginning* God created them. If this account is true, we must believe that God, existing in infinite space surrounded by eternal nothing, naught and void, created, produced, called into being, willed into existence this universe of countless stars.

The next thing we are told by this inspired gentleman is, that God created light, and proceeded to divide it from the darkness.

Certainly, the person who wrote this believed that darkness was a thing, an entity, a material that could get mixed and tangled up with light, and that these entities, light and darkness, had to be separated. In his imagination he probably saw God throwing pieces and chunks of darkness on one side, and rays and beams of light on the other. It is hard for a man who has been born but once to understand these things. For my part, I cannot understand how light can be separated from darkness. I had always supposed that darkness was simply the absence of

light, and that under no circumstances could it be necessary to take the darkness away from the light. It is certain, however, that Moses believed darkness to be a form of matter, because I find that in another place he speaks of a darkness that could be felt. They used to have on exhibition at Rome a bottle of the darkness that overspread Egypt.

You cannot divide light from darkness any more than you can divide heat from cold. Cold is an absence of heat, and darkness is an absence of light. I suppose that we have no conception of absolute cold. We know only degrees of heat. Twenty degrees below zero is just twenty degrees warmer than forty degrees below zero. Neither cold nor darkness are entities, and these words express simply either the absolute or partial absence of heat or light. I cannot conceive how light can be divided from darkness, but I can conceive how a barbarian several thousand years ago, writing upon a subject about which he knew nothing, could make a mistake. The creator of light could not have written in this way. If such a being exists, he must have known the nature of that "mode of motion" that paints the earth on every eye, and clothes in garments seven-hued this universe of worlds.

VII.

TUESDAY.

WE are next informed by Moses that "God said Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters;" and that "God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

What did the writer mean by the word firmament? Theologians now tell us that he meant an "expanse." This will not do. How could an expanse divide the waters from the waters, so that the waters above the expanse would not fall into and mingle with the waters below the expanse? The truth is that Moses regarded the firmament as a solid affair. It was where God lived, and where water was kept. It was for this reason that they used to pray for rain. They supposed that some angel could with a lever raise a gate and let out the quantity of moisture desired. It was with the water from this firmament that the world was drowned when the windows of heaven were opened. It was in this

firmament that the sons of God lived—the sons who "saw the daughters of men that they were fair and took them wives of all which they chose." The issue of such marriages were giants, and "the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Nothing is clearer than that Moses regarded the firmament as a vast material division that separated the waters of the world, and upon whose floor God lived, surrounded by his sons. In no other way could he account for rain. Where did the water come from? He knew nothing about the laws of evaporation. He did not know that the sun wooed with amorous kisses the waves of the sea, and that they, clad in glorified mist rising to meet their lover, were, by disappointment, changed to tears and fell as rain.

The idea that the firmament was the abode of the Deity must have been in the mind of Moses when he related the dream of Jacob. "And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; and behold the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God."

So, when the people were building the tower of Babel "the Lord came down to see the city, and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to do; and nothing will be restrained from them which they imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech."

The man who wrote that absurd account must have believed that God lived above the earth, in the firmament. The same idea was in the mind of the Psalmist when he said that God "bowed the heavens and came down."

Of course, God could easily remove any person bodily to heaven, as it was but a little way above the earth. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The accounts in the Bible of the ascension of Elijah, Christ and St. Paul were born of the belief that the firmament was the dwelling-place of God. It probably never occurred to these writers that if the firmament was seven or eight miles away, Enoch and the rest would have been frozen perfectly stiff long before the journey could have been completed. Possibly Elijah might have made

the voyage, as he was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire "by a whirlwind."

The truth is, that Moses was mistaken, and upon that mistake the Christians located their heaven and their hell. The telescope destroyed the firmament, did away with the heaven of the New Testament, rendered the ascension of our Lord and the assumption of his Mother infinitely absurd, crumbled to chaos the gates and palaces of the New Jerusalem, and in their places gave to man a wilderness of worlds.

VIII.

WEDNESDAY.

We are next informed by the historian of creation, that after God had finished making the firmament and had succeeded in dividing the waters by means of an "expanse," he proceeded "to gather the waters on the earth together in seas, so that the dry land might appear."

Certainly the writer of this did not have any conception of the real form of the earth. He could not have known anything of the attraction of gravitation. He must have regarded the earth as flat and supposed that it required considerable force and power to induce the water to leave the mountains and collect in the valleys. Just as soon as the water was forced to run down hill, the dry land appeared, and the grass began to grow, and the mantles of green were thrown over the shoulders of the hills, and the trees laughed into bud and blossom, and the branches were laden with fruit. And all this happened before a ray had left the quiver of the sun, before a glittering beam had thrilled the bosom of a

flower, and before the Dawn with trembling hands had drawn aside the curtains of the East and welcomed to her arms the eager god of Day.

It does not seem to me that grass and trees could grow and ripen into seed and fruit without the sun. According to the account, this all happened on the third day. Now, if, as the Christians say, Moses did not mean by the word day a period of twenty-four hours, but an immense and almost measureless space of time, and as God did not, according to this view make any animals until the fifth day, that is, not for millions of years after he made the grass and trees, for what purpose did he cause the trees to bear fruit?

Moses says that God said on the third day, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself after his kind; and God saw that it was good, and the evening and the morning were the third day."

There was nothing to eat this fruit; not an insect with painted wings sought the honey of the flowers;

not a single living, breathing thing upon the earth. Plenty of grass, a great variety of herbs, an abundance of fruit, but not a mouth in all the world. If Moses is right, this state of things lasted only two days; but if the modern theologians are correct, it continued for millions of ages.

"It is now well known that the organic history of the earth can be properly divided into five epochs—the Primordial, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, and Quaternary. Each of these epochs is characterized by animal and vegetable life peculiar to itself. In the FIRST will be found Algæ and Skull-less Vertebrates, in the SECOND, Ferns and Fishes, in the THIRD, Pine Forests and Reptiles, in the FOURTH, Foliaceous Forests and Mammals, and in the FIFTH, Man."

How much more reasonable this is than the idea that the earth was covered with grass, and herbs, and trees loaded with fruit for millions of years before an animal existed.

There is, in Nature, an even balance forever kept between the total amounts of animal and vegetable life. "In her wonderful economy she must form and bountifully nourish her vegetable progeny—twin-brother life to her, with that of animals. The perfect balance between plant existences and animal

existences must always be maintained, while matter courses through the eternal circle, becoming each in turn. If an animal be resolved into its ultimate constituents in a period according to the surrounding circumstances, say, of four hours, of four months, of four years, or even of four thousand years,—for it is impossible to deny that there may be instances of all these periods during which the process has continued —those elements which assume the gaseous form mingle at once with the atmosphere and are taken up from it without delay by the ever-open mouths of vegetable life. By a thousand pores in every leaf the carbonic acid which renders the atmosphere unfit for animal life is absorbed, the carbon being separated, and assimilated to form the vegetable fibre, which, as wood, makes and furnishes our houses and ships, is burned for our warmth, or is stored up under pressure for coal. All this carbon has played its part, and many parts in its time, as animal existences from monad up to man. Our mahogany of to-day has been many negroes in its turn, and before the African existed, was integral portions of many a generation of extinct species."

It seems reasonable to suppose that certain kinds of vegetation and certain kinds of animals should

exist together, and that as the character of the vegetation changed, a corresponding change would take place in the animal world. It may be that I am led to these conclusions by "total depravity," or that I lack the necessary humility of spirit to satisfactorily harmonize Haeckel and Moses; or that I am carried away by pride, blinded by reason, given over to hardness of heart that I might be damned, but I never can believe that the earth was covered with leaves, and buds, and flowers, and fruits before the sun with glittering spear had driven back the hosts of Night.

IX.

THURSDAY.

AFTER the world was covered with vegetation, it occurred to Moses that it was about time to make a sun and moon; and so we are told that on the fourth day God said, "Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also."

Can we believe that the inspired writer had any idea of the size of the sun? Draw a circle five inches in diameter, and by its side thrust a pin through the paper. The hole made by the pin will sustain about the same relation to the circle that the earth does to the sun. Did he know that the sun was eight hundred and sixty thousand miles in diameter; that it was enveloped in an ocean of fire thousands of miles in depth, hotter even than the Christian's hell,

over which sweep tempests of flame moving at the rate of one hundred miles a second, compared with which the wildest storm that ever wrecked the forests of this world was but a calm? Did he know that the sun every moment of time throws out as much heat as could be generated by the combustion of millions upon millions of tons of coal? Did he know that the volume of the earth is less than one-millionth of that of the sun? Did he know of the one hundred and four planets belonging to our solar system, all children of the sun? Did he know of Jupiter eighty-five thousand miles in diameter, hundreds of times as large as our earth, turning on his axis at the rate of twenty-five thousand miles an hour accompanied by four moons, making the tour of his orbit in fifty years, a distance of three thousand million miles? Did he know anything about Saturn, his rings and his eight moons? Did he have the faintest idea that all these planets were once a part of the sun; that the vast luminary was once thousands of millions of miles in diameter; that Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars were all born before our earth, and that by no possibility could this world have existed three days, nor three periods, nor three "good whiles" before its source, the sun?

Moses supposed the sun to be about three or four feet in diameter and the moon about half that size. Compared with the earth they were but simple specks. This idea seems to have been shared by all the "inspired" men. We find in the book of Joshua that the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

We are told that the sacred writer wrote in common speech as we do when we talk about the rising and setting of the sun, and that all he intended to say was that the earth ceased to turn on its axis "for about a whole day."

My own opinion is that General Joshua knew no more about the motions of the earth than he did about mercy and justice. If he had known that the earth turned upon its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, and swept in its course about the sun at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, he would have doubled the hailstones, spoken of in the same chapter, that the Lord cast down from heaven, and allowed the sun and moon to rise and set in the usual way.

It is impossible to conceive of a more absurd story than this about the stopping of the sun and moon, and yet nothing so excites the malice of the orthodox preacher as to call its truth in question. Some endeavor to account for the phenomenon by natural causes, while others attempt to show that God could, by the refraction of light have made the sun visible although actually shining on the opposite side of the earth. The last hypothesis has been seriously urged by ministers within the last few months. The Rev. Henry M. Morey of South Bend, Indiana, says "that the phenomenon was simply optical. The rotary motion of the earth was not disturbed, but the light of the sun was prolonged by the same laws of refraction and reflection by which the sun now appears to be above the horizon when it is really below. The medium through which the sun's rays passed may have been miraculously influenced so as to have caused the sun to linger above the horizon long after its usual time for disappearance."

This is the latest and ripest product of Christian scholarship upon this question no doubt, but still it is not entirely satisfactory to me. According to the sacred account the sun did not linger, merely, above the horizon, but stood still "in the midst of heaven

for about a whole day," that is to say, for about twelve hours. If the air was miraculously changed, so that it would refract the rays of the sun while the earth turned over as usual for "about a whole day," then, at the end of that time the sun must have been visible in the east, that is, it must by that time have been the next morning. According to this, that most wonderful day must have been at least thirty-six hours in length. We have first, the twelve hours of natural light, then twelve hours of "refracted and reflected" light. By that time it would again be morning, and the sun would shine for twelve hours more in the natural way, making thirty-six hours in all.

If the Rev. Morey would depend a little less on "refraction" and a little more on "reflection," he would conclude that the whole story is simply a barbaric myth and fable.

It hardly seems reasonable that God, if there is one, would either stop the globe, change the constitution of the atmosphere or the nature of light simply to afford Joshua an opportunity to kill people on that day when he could just as easily have waited until the next morning. It certainly cannot be very gratifying to God for us to believe such childish things.

It has been demonstrated that force is eternal; that it is forever active, and eludes destruction by change of form. Motion is a form of force, and all arrested motion changes instantly to heat. The earth turns upon its axis at about one thousand miles an hour. Let it be stopped and a force beyond our imagination is changed to heat. It has been calculated that to stop the world would produce as much heat as the burning of a solid piece of coal three times the size of the earth. And yet we are asked to believe that this was done in order that one barbarian might defeat another. Such stories never would have been written, had not the belief been general that the heavenly bodies were as nothing compared with the earth.

The view of Moses was acquiesced in by the Jewish people and by the Christian world for thousands of years. It is supposed that Moses lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ, and although he was "inspired," and obtained his information directly from God, he did not know as much about our solar system as the Chinese did a thousand years before he was born. "The Emperor Chwen-hio adopted as an epoch, a conjunction of the planets Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, which has been

shown by M. Bailly to have occurred no less than 2449 years before Christ." The ancient Chinese knew not only the motions of the planets, but they could calculate eclipses. "In the reign of the Emperor Chow-Kang, the chief astronomers, Ho and Hi were condemned to death for neglecting to announce a solar eclipse which took place 2169 B.C., a clear proof that the prediction of eclipses was a part of the duty of the imperial astronomers."

Is it not strange that a Chinaman should find out by his own exertions more about the material universe than Moses could when assisted by its Creator?

About eight hundred years after God gave Moses the principal facts about the creation of the "heaven and the earth" he performed another miracle far more wonderful than stopping the world. On this occasion he not only stopped the earth, but actually caused it to turn the other way. A Jewish king was sick, and God, in order to convince him that he would ultimately recover, offered to make the shadow on the dial go forward, or backward ten degrees. The king thought it was too easy a thing to make the shadow go forward, and asked that it be turned back. Thereupon, "Isaiah the

prophet cried unto the Lord, and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz." I hardly see how this miracle could be accounted for even by "refraction" and "reflection."

It seems, from the account, that this stupendous miracle was performed after the king had been cured. The account of the shadow going backward is given in the eleventh verse of the twentieth chapter of Second Kings, while the cure is given in the seventh verse of the same chapter. "And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered."

Stopping the world and causing it to turn back ten degrees after that, seems to have been, as the boil was already cured by the figs, a useless display of power.

The easiest way to account for all these wonders is to say that the "inspired" writers were mistaken. In this way a fearful burden is lifted from the credulity of man, and he is left free to believe the evidences of his own senses, and the demonstrations of science. In this way he can emancipate himself from the slavery of superstition, the control of the barbaric dead, and the despotism of the church.

Only about a hundred years ago, Buffon, the naturalist, was compelled by the faculty of theology of Paris to publicly renounce fourteen "errors" in his work on Natural History because they were at variance with the Mosaic account of creation. The Pentateuch is still the scientific standard of the church, and ignorant priests, armed with that, pronounce sentence upon the vast accomplishments of modern thought.

X

"HE MADE THE STARS ALSO."

MOSES came very near forgetting about the stars and only gave five words to all the hosts of heaven. Can it be possible that he knew anything about the stars beyond the mere fact that he saw them shining above him?

Did he know that the nearest star, the one we ought to be the best acquainted with, is twenty-one billion of miles away, and that it is a sun shining by its own light? Did he know of the next, that is thirty-seven billion miles distant? Is it possible that he was acquainted with Sirius, a sun two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight times larger than our own, surrounded by a system of heavenly bodies, several of which are already known, and distant from us eighty-two billion miles? Did he know that the Polar star that tells the mariner his course and guided slaves to liberty and joy, is distant from this little world two hundred and ninety-two billion miles.

and that Capella wheels and shines one hundred and thirty-three billion miles beyond? Did he know that it would require about seventy-two years for light to reach us from this star? Did he know that light travels one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second? Did he know that some stars are so far away in the infinite abysses that five millions of years are required for their light to reach this globe?

If this is true, and if as the Bible tells us, the stars were made after the earth, then this world has been wheeling in its orbit for at least five million years.

It may be replied that it was not the intention of God to teach geology and astronomy. Then why did he say anything upon these subjects? and if he did say anything, why did he not give the facts?

According to the sacred records God created, on the first day, the heaven and the earth, "moved upon the face of the waters," and made the light. On the second day he made the firmament or the "expanse" and divided the waters. On the third day he gathered the waters into seas, let the dry land appear and caused the earth to bring forth grass, herbs and

fruit trees, and on the fourth day he made the sun, moon and stars and set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. This division of labor is very striking. The work of the other days is as nothing when compared with that of the fourth. Is it possible that it required the same time and labor to make the grass, herbs and fruit trees, that it did to fill with countless constellations the infinite expanse of space?

XI.

FRIDAY.

We are then told that on the next day "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales and every living creature which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind, and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth."

Is it true that while the dry land was covered with grass, and herbs, and trees bearing fruit, the ocean was absolutely devoid of life, and so remained for millions of years?

If Moses meant twenty-four hours by the word day, then it would make but little difference on which of the six days animals were made; but if the word

day was used to express millions of ages, during which life was slowly evolved from monad up to man, then the account becomes infinitely absurd, puerile and foolish. There is not a scientist of high standing who will say that in his judgment the earth was covered with fruit-bearing trees before the moners, the ancestors it may be of the human race, felt in Laurentian seas the first faint throb of life. Nor is there one who will declare that there was a single spire of grass before the sun had poured upon the world his flood of gold.

Why should men in the name of religion try to harmonize the contradictions that exist between Nature and a book? Why should philosophers be denounced for placing more reliance upon what they know than upon what they have been told? If there is a God, it is reasonably certain that he made the world, but it is by no means certain that he is the author of the Bible. Why then should we not place greater confidence in Nature than in a book? And even if this God made not only the world but the book besides, it does not follow that the book is the best part of creation, and the only part that we will be eternally punished for denying. It seems to me that it is quite as important to know something

of the solar system, something of the physical history of this globe, as it is to know the adventures of Jonah or the diet of Ezekiel. For my part, I would infinitely prefer to know all the results of scientific investigation, than to be inspired as Moses was. Supposing the Bible to be true ; why is it any worse or more wicked for Freethinkers to deny it, than for priests to deny the doctrine of evolution, or the dynamic theory of heat ? Why should we be damned for laughing at Samson and his foxes, while others, holding the Nebular Hypothesis in utter contempt, go straight to heaven ? It seems to me that a belief in the great truths of science are fully as essential to salvation, as the creed of any church. We are taught that a man may be perfectly acceptable to God even if he denies the rotundity of the earth, the Copernican system, the three laws of Kepler, the indestructibility of matter and the attraction of gravitation. And we are also taught that a man may be right upon all these questions, and yet, for failing to believe in the " scheme of salvation," be eternally lost.

XII.

SATURDAY.

On this, the last day of creation, God said:—"Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good."

Now, is it true that the seas were filled with fish, the sky with fowls, and the earth covered with grass, and herbs, and fruit bearing trees, millions of ages before there was a creeping thing in existence? Must we admit that plants and animals were the result of the fiat of some incomprehensible intelligence independent of the operation of what are known as natural causes? Why is a miracle any more necessary to account for yesterday than for to-day or for to-morrow?

If there is an infinite Power, nothing can be more certain than that this Power works in accordance with what we call law, that is, by and through natural causes. If anything can be found without a pedigree of natural antecedents, it will then be time enough to talk about the fiat of creation. There must have been a time when plants and animals did not exist upon this globe. The question, and the only question is, whether they were naturally produced. If the account given by Moses is true, then the vegetable and animal existences are the result of certain special fiats of creation entirely independent of the operation of natural causes. This is so grossly improbable, so at variance with the experience and observation of mankind, that it cannot be adopted without abandoning forever the basis of scientific thought and action.

It may be urged that we do not understand the sacred record correctly. To this it may be replied that for thousands of years the account of the creation has, by the Jewish and Christian world, been regarded as literally true. If it was inspired, of course God must have known just how it would be understood, and consequently must have intended that it should be understood just as he knew it would be. One man writing to another, may mean one thing, and

yet be understood as meaning something else. Now, if the writer knew that he would be misunderstood, and also knew that he could use other words that would convey his real meaning, but did not, we would say that he used words on purpose to mislead, and was not an honest man.

If a being of infinite wisdom wrote the Bible, or caused it to be written, he must have known exactly how his words would be interpreted by all the world, and he must have intended to convey the very meaning that was conveyed. He must have known that by reading that book, man would form erroneous views as to the shape, antiquity, and size of this world; that he would be misled as to the time and order of creation; that he would have the most childish and contemptible views of the creator; that the "sacred word" would be used to support slavery and polygamy; that it would build dungeons for the good, and light fagots to consume the brave, and therefore he must have intended that these results should follow. He also must have known that thousands and millions of men and women never could believe his Bible, and that the number of unbelievers would increase in the exact ratio of civilization, and therefore, he must have intended that result.

Let us understand this. An honest finite being uses the best words, in his judgment, to convey his meaning. This is the best he can do, because he cannot certainly know the exact effect of his words on others. But an infinite being must know not only the real meaning of the words, but the exact meaning they will convey to every reader and hearer. He must know every meaning that they are capable of conveying to every mind. He must also know what explanations must be made to prevent misconception. If an infinite being cannot, in making a revelation to man, use such words that every person to whom a revelation is essential will understand distinctly what that revelation is, then a revelation from God through the instrumentality of language is impossible, or it is not essential that all should understand it correctly. It may be urged that millions have not the capacity to understand a revelation, although expressed in the plainest words. To this it seems a sufficient reply to ask, why a being of infinite power should create men so devoid of intelligence, that he cannot by any means make known to them his will? We are told that it is exceedingly plain, and that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. This statement is refuted by the religious history of the

Christian world. Every sect is a certificate that God has not plainly revealed his will to man. To each reader the Bible conveys a different meaning. About the meaning of this book, called a revelation, there have been ages of war, and centuries of sword and flame. If written by an infinite God, he must have known that these results must follow; and thus knowing, he must be responsible for all.

Is it not infinitely more reasonable to say that this book is the work of man, that it is filled with mingled truth and error, with mistakes and facts, and reflects, too faithfully perhaps, the "very form and pressure of its time"?

If there are mistakes in the Bible, certainly they were made by man. If there is anything contrary to nature, it was written by man. If there is anything immoral, cruel, heartless or infamous, it certainly was never written by a being worthy of the adoration of mankind.

XIII.

LET US MAKE MAN.

We are next informed by the author of the Pentateuch that God said "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him—male and female created he them."

If this account means anything, it means that man was created in the physical image and likeness of God. Moses while he speaks of man as having been made in the image of God, never speaks of God except as having the form of a man. He speaks of God as "walking in the garden in the cool of the day;" and that Adam and Eve "heard his voice." He is constantly telling what God said, and in a thousand passages he refers to him as not only having the human form, but as performing actions, such as man performs. The God of Moses was a God with hands, with feet, with the organs of speech.

A God of passion, of hatred, of revenge, of affection, of repentance; a God who made mistakes:—in other words, an immense and powerful man.

It will not do to say that Moses meant to convey the idea that God made man in his mental or moral image. Some have insisted that man was made in the moral image of God because he was made pure. Purity cannot be manufactured. A moral character cannot be made for man by a god. Every man must make his own moral character. Consequently, if God is infinitely pure, Adam and Eve were not made in his image in that respect. Others say that Adam and Eve were made in the mental image of God. If it is meant by that, that they were created with reasoning powers like, but not to the extent of those possessed by a god, then this may be admitted. But certainly this idea was not in the mind of Moses. He regarded the human form as being in the image of God, and for that reason always spoke of God as having that form. No one can read the Pentateuch without coming to the conclusion that the author supposed that man was created in the physical likeness of Deity. God said "Go to, let us go down." "God smelled a sweet savor;" "God repented him that he had made man;" "and God said;" and

"walked;" and "talked;" and "rested." All these expressions are inconsistent with any other idea than that the person using them regarded God as having the form of man.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible for a man to conceive of a personal God, other than as a being having the human form. No one can think of an infinite being having the form of a horse, or of a bird, or of any animal beneath man. It is one of the necessities of the mind to associate forms with intellectual capacities. The highest form of which we have any conception is man's, and consequently, his is the only form that we can find in imagination to give to a personal God, because all other forms are, in our minds, connected with lower intelligences.

It is impossible to think of a personal God as a spirit without form. We can use these words, but they do not convey to the mind any real and tangible meaning. Every one who thinks of a personal God at all, thinks of him as having the human form. Take from God the idea of form; speak of him simply as an all pervading spirit—which means an all pervading something about which we know nothing—and Pantheism is the result.

We are told that God made man; and the question naturally arises, how was this done? Was it by a process of "evolution," "development;" the "transmission of acquired habits;" the "survival of the fittest," or was the necessary amount of clay kneaded to the proper consistency, and then by the hands of God moulded into form? Modern science tells that man has been evolved, through countless epochs, from the lower forms; that he is the result of almost an infinite number of actions, reactions, experiences, states, forms, wants and adaptations. Did Moses intend to convey such a meaning, or did he believe that God took a sufficient amount of dust, made it the proper shape, and breathed into it the breath of life? Can any believer in the Bible give any reasonable account of this process of creation? Is it possible to imagine what was really done? Is there any theologian who will contend that man was created directly from the earth? Will he say that man was made substantially as he now is, with all his muscles properly developed for walking and speaking, and performing every variety of human action? That all his bones were formed as they now are, and all the relations of nerve, ligament, brain and motion as they are to-day?

Looking back over the history of animal life from the lowest to the highest forms, we find that there has been a slow and gradual development; a certain but constant relation between want and production; between use and form. The Moner is said to be the simplest form of animal life that has yet been found. It has been described as "an organism without organs." It is a kind of structureless structure; a little mass of transparent jelly that can flatten itself out, and can expand and contract around its food. It can feed without a mouth, digest without a stomach, walk without feet, and reproduce itself by simple division. By taking this Moner as the commencement of animal life, or rather as the first animal, it is easy to follow the development of the organic structure through all the forms of life to man himself. In this way finally every muscle, bone and joint, every organ, form and function may be accounted for. In this way, and in this way only, can the existence of rudimentary organs be explained. Blot from the human mind the ideas of evolution, heredity, adaptation, and "the survival of the fittest," with which it has been enriched by Lamarck, Goethe, Darwin, Haeckel and Spencer, and all the facts in the history of animal life become utterly disconnected and meaningless.

Shall we throw away all that has been discovered with regard to organic life, and in its place take the statements of one who lived in the rude morning of a barbaric day? Will anybody now contend that man was a direct and independent creation, and sustains and bears no relation to the animals below him? Belief upon this subject must be governed at last by evidence. Man cannot believe as he pleases. He can control his speech, and can say that he believes or disbelieves; but after all, his will cannot depress or raise the scales with which his reason finds the worth and weight of facts. If this is not so, investigation, evidence, judgment and reason are but empty words.

I ask again, how were Adam and Eve created? In one account they are created male and female, and apparently at the same time. In the next account, Adam is made first, and Eve a long time afterwards, and from a part of the man. Did God simply by his creative fiat cause a rib slowly to expand, grow and divide into nerve, ligament, cartilage and flesh? How was the woman created from a rib? How was man created simply from dust? For my part, I cannot believe this statement. I may suffer for this in the world to come; and may,

millions of years hence, sincerely wish that I had never investigated the subject, but had been content to take the ideas of the dead. I do not believe that any deity works in that way. So far as my experience goes, there is an unbroken procession of cause and effect. Each thing is a necessary link in an infinite chain; and I cannot conceive of this chain being broken even for one instant. Back of the simplest moner there is a cause, and back of that another, and so on, it seems to me, forever. In my philosophy I postulate neither beginning nor ending.

If the Mosaic account is true, we know how long man has been upon this earth. If that account can be relied on, the first man was made about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago. Sixteen hundred and fifty-six years after the making of the first man, the inhabitants of the world, with the exception of eight people, were destroyed by a flood. This flood occurred only about four thousand two hundred and twenty-seven years ago. If this account is correct, at that time, only one kind of men existed. Noah and his family were certainly of the same blood. It therefore follows that all the differences we see between the various races of men have been caused in about four thousand years. If the

account of the deluge is true, then since that event all the ancient kingdoms of the earth were founded, and their inhabitants passed through all the stages of savage, nomadic, barbaric and semi-civilized life; through the epochs of Stone, Bronze and Iron; established commerce, cultivated the arts, built cities, filled them with palaces and temples, invented writing, produced a literature and slowly fell to shapeless ruin. We must believe that all this has happened within a period of four thousand years.

From representations found upon Egyptian granite made more than three thousand years ago, we know that the negro was as black, his lips as full, and his hair as closely curled then as now. If we know anything, we know that there was at that time substantially the same difference between the Egyptian and the Negro as now. If we know anything, we know that magnificent statues were made in Egypt four thousand years before our era—that is to say, about six thousand years ago. There was at the World's Exposition, in the Egyptian department, a statue of king Cephren, known to have been chiseled more than six thousand years ago. In other words, if the Mosaic account must be believed, this statue was made before the world. We also

know, if we know anything, that men lived in Europe with the hairy mammoth, the cave bear, the rhinoceros, and the hyena. Among the bones of these animals have been found the stone hatchets and flint arrows of our ancestors. In the caves where they lived have been discovered the remains of these animals that had been conquered, killed and devoured as food, hundreds of thousands of years ago.

If these facts are true, Moses was mistaken. For my part, I have infinitely more confidence in the discoveries of to-day, than in the records of a barbarous people. It will not now do to say that man has existed upon this earth for only about six thousand years. One can hardly compute in his imagination the time necessary for man to emerge from the barbarous state, naked and helpless, surrounded by animals far more powerful than he, to progress and finally create the civilizations of India, Egypt and Athens. The distance from savagery to Shakespeare must be measured not by hundreds, but by millions of years.

XIV.

SUNDAY.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

The great work had been accomplished, the world, the sun, and moon, and all the hosts of heaven were finished; the earth was clothed in green, the seas were filled with life, the cattle wandered by the brooks—insects with painted wings were in the happy air, Adam and Eve were making each other's acquaintance, and God was resting from his work. He was contemplating the accomplishments of a week.

Because he rested on that day he sanctified it, and for that reason and for that alone, it was by the Jews considered a holy day. If he only rested on

that day, there ought to be some account of what he did the following Monday. Did he rest on that day? What did he do after he got rested? Has he done anything in the way of creation since Saturday evening of the first week?

It is now claimed by the "scientific" Christians that the "days" of creation were not ordinary days of twenty-four hours each, but immensely long periods of time. If they are right, then how long was the seventh day? Was that, too, a geologic period covering thousands of ages? That cannot be, because Adam and Eve were created the Saturday evening before, and according to the Bible that was about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago. I cannot state the time exactly, because there have been as many as one hundred and forty different opinions given by learned Biblical students as to the time between the creation of the world and the birth of Christ. We are quite certain, however, that, according to the Bible, it is not more than six thousand years since the creation of Adam. From this it would appear that the seventh day was not a geologic epoch, but was in fact a period of less than six thousand years, and probably of only twenty-four hours.

The theologians who "answer" these things may take their choice. If they take the ground that the "days" were periods of twenty-four hours, then geology will force them to throw away the whole account. If, on the other hand, they admit that the days were vast "periods," then the sacredness of the Sabbath must be given up.

There is found in the Bible no intimation that there was the least difference in the days. They are all spoken of in the same way. It may be replied that our translation is incorrect. If this is so, then only those who understand Hebrew, have had a revelation from God, and all the rest have been deceived.

How is it possible to sanctify a space of time? Is rest holier than labor? If there is any difference between days, ought not that to be considered best in which the most useful labor has been performed?

Of all the superstitions of mankind, this insanity about the "sacred Sabbath" is the most absurd. The idea of feeling it a duty to be solemn and sad one-seventh of the time! To think that we can please an infinite being by staying in some dark and sombre room, instead of walking in the perfumed fields! Why should God hate to see a man happy? Why

should it excite his wrath to see a family in the woods, by some babbling stream, talking, laughing and loving? Nature works on that "sacred" day. The earth turns, the rivers run, the trees grow, buds burst into flower, and birds fill the air with song. Why should we look sad, and think about death, and hear about hell? Why should that day be filled with gloom instead of joy?

A poor mechanic, working all the week in dust and noise, needs a day of rest and joy, a day to visit stream and wood—a day to live with wife and child; a day in which to laugh at care, and gather hope and strength for toils to come. And his weary wife needs a breath of sunny air, away from street and wall, amid the hills or by the margin of the sea, where she can sit and prattle with her babe, and fill with happy dreams the long, glad day.

The "Sabbath" was born of asceticism, hatred of human joy, fanaticism, ignorance, egotism of priests and the cowardice of the people. This day, for thousands of years, has been dedicated to superstition, to the dissemination of mistakes, and the establishment of falsehoods. Every Freethinker, as a matter of duty, should violate this day. He should assert his independence, and do all within his

power to wrest the Sabbath from the gloomy church and give it back to liberty and joy. Freethinkers should make the Sabbath a day of mirth and music; a day to spend with wife and child—a day of games, and books, and dreams—a day to put fresh flowers above our sleeping dead—a day of memory and hope, of love and rest.

Why should we in this age of the world be dominated by the dead? Why should barbarian Jews who went down to death and dust three thousand years ago, control the living world? Why should we care for the superstition of men who began the Sabbath by paring their nails, "beginning at the fourth finger, then going to the second, then to the fifth, then to the third, and ending with the thumb?" How pleasing to God this must have been. The Jews were very careful of these nail parings. They who threw them upon the ground were wicked, because Satan used them to work evil upon the earth. They believed that upon the Sabbath, souls were allowed to leave purgatory and cool their burning souls in water. Fires were neither allowed to be kindled nor extinguished, and upon that day it was a sin to bind up wounds. "The lame might use a staff, but the blind could not." So strict was the

Sabbath kept, that at one time "if a Jew on a journey was overtaken by the 'sacred day' in a wood, or on the highway, no matter where, nor under what circumstances, he must sit down," and there remain until the day was gone. "If he fell down in the dirt, there he was compelled to stay until the day was done." For violating the Sabbath, the punishment was death, for nothing short of the offender's blood could satisfy the wrath of God. There are, in the Old Testament, two reasons given for abstaining from labor on the Sabbath :—the resting of God, and the redemption of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt.

Since the establishment of the Christian religion, the day has been changed, and Christians do not regard the day as holy upon which God actually rested, and which he sanctified. The Christian Sabbath, or the "Lord's day" was legally established by the murderer Constantine, because upon that day Christ was supposed to have risen from the dead.

It is not easy to see where Christians got the right to disregard the direct command of God, to labor on the day he sanctified, and keep as sacred, a day upon which he commanded men to labor. The Sabbath of God is Saturday, and if any day is to be

kept holy, that is the one, and not the Sunday of the Christian.

Let us throw away these superstitions and take the higher, nobler ground, that every day should be rendered sacred by some loving act, by increasing the happinesss of man, giving birth to noble thoughts, putting in the path of toil some flower of joy, helping the unfortunate, lifting the fallen, dispelling gloom, destroying prejudice, defending the helpless and filling homes with light and love.

XV.

THE NECESSITY FOR A GOOD MEMORY.

It must not be forgotten that there are two accounts of the creation in Genesis. The first account stops with the third verse of the second chapter. The chapters have been improperly divided. In the original Hebrew the Pentateuch was neither divided into chapters nor verses. There was not even any system of punctuation. It was written wholly with consonants, without vowels, and without any marks, dots, or lines to indicate them.

These accounts are materially different, and both cannot be true. Let us see wherein they differ.

The second account of the creation begins with the fourth verse of the second chapter, and is as follows:

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

"And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

"But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads.

"The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

"And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

"And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

"And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.

"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man.

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

ORDER OF CREATION IN THE FIRST ACCOUNT:

1. The heaven and the earth, and light were made.

2. The firmament was constructed and the waters divided.

3. The waters gathered into seas—and then came dry land, grass, herbs and fruit trees.

4. The sun and moon. He made the stars also.

5. Fishes, fowls, and great whales.

6. Beasts, cattle, every creeping thing, man and woman.

ORDER OF CREATION IN THE SECOND ACCOUNT:

1. The heavens and the earth.

2. A mist went up from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

3. Created a man out of dust, by the name of Adam.

4. Planted a garden eastward in Eden, and put the man in it.

5. Created the beasts and fowls.

6. Created a woman out of one of the man's ribs.

In the second account, man was made *before* the beasts and fowls. If this is true, the first account is false. And if the theologians of our time are correct in their view that the Mosaic day means thousands of ages, then, according to the second account, Adam existed millions of years before Eve was formed. He must have lived one Mosaic day before there were any trees, and another Mosaic day before the beasts and fowls were created. Will some kind clergymen tell us upon what kind of food Adam subsisted during these immense periods?

In the second account a man is made, and the fact that he was without a helpmeet did not occur to

the Lord God until a couple "of vast periods" afterwards. The Lord God suddenly coming to an appreciation of the situation said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an helpmeet for him."

Now, after concluding to make "an helpmeet" for Adam, what did the Lord God do? Did he at once proceed to make a woman? No. What did he do? He made the beasts, and tried to induce Adam to take one of them for "an helpmeet." If I am incorrect, read the following account, and tell me what it means:

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.

"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him."

Unless the Lord God was looking for an helpmeet for Adam, why did he cause the animals to pass before him? And why did he, after the menagerie had passed by, pathetically exclaim, "But for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him"?

It seems that Adam saw nothing that struck his fancy. The fairest ape, the sprightliest chimpanzee, the loveliest baboon, the most bewitching orang-outang, the most fascinating gorilla failed to touch with love's sweet pain, poor Adam's lonely heart. Let us rejoice that this was so. Had he fallen in love then, there never would have been a Freethinker in this world.

Dr. Adam Clarke, speaking of this remarkable proceeding says:—"God caused the animals to pass before Adam to show him that no creature yet formed could make him a suitable companion; that Adam was convinced that none of these animals could be a suitable companion for him, and that therefore he must continue in a state that was not good (celibacy) unless he became a further debtor to the bounty of his maker, for among all the animals which he had formed, there was not a helpmeet for Adam."

Upon this same subject, Dr. Scott informs us "that it was not conducive to the happiness of the man to remain without the consoling society, and endearment of tender friendship, nor consistent with the end of his creation to be without marriage by which the earth might be replenished and worshipers and servants raised up to render him praise and glory. Adam seems to have been vastly better acquainted by intuition or revelation with the distinct properties of every creature than the most sagacious observer since the fall of man.

"Upon this review of the animals, not one was found in outward form his counterpart, nor one suited to engage his affections, participate in his enjoyments, or associate with him in the worship of God."

Dr. Matthew Henry admits that "God brought all the animals together to see if there was a suitable match for Adam in any of the numerous families of the inferior creatures, but there was none. They were all looked over, but Adam could not be matched among them all. Therefore God created a new thing to be a helpmeet for him."

Failing to satisfy Adam with any of the inferior animals, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and while in this sleep took out one of

Adam's ribs and "closed up the flesh instead thereof." And out of this rib, the Lord God made a woman, and brought her to the man.

Was the Lord God compelled to take a part of the man because he had used up all the original "nothing" out of which the universe was made? Is it possible for any sane and intelligent man to believe this story? Must a man be born a second time before this account seems reasonable?

Imagine the Lord God with a bone in his hand with which to start a woman, trying to make up his mind whether to make a blonde or a brunette!

Just at this point it may be proper for me to warn all persons from laughing at or making light of, any stories found in the "Holy Bible." When you come to die, every laugh will be a thorn in your pillow. At that solemn moment, as you look back upon the records of your life, no matter how many men you may have wrecked and ruined; no matter how many women you have deceived and deserted, all that can be forgiven; but if you remember then that you have laughed at even one story in God's "sacred book" you will see through the gathering shadows of death the forked tongues of devils, and the leering eyes of fiends.

These stories must be believed, or the work of regeneration can never be commenced. No matter how well you act your part, live as honestly as you may, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, divide your last farthing with the poor, and you are simply traveling the broad road that leads inevitably to eternal death, unless at the same time you implicitly believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God.

Let me show you the result of unbelief. Let us suppose, for a moment, that we are at the Day of Judgment, listening to the trial of souls as they arrive. The Recording Secretary, or whoever does the cross-examining, says to a soul:

Where are you from?

I am from the Earth.

What kind of a man were you?

Well, I don't like to talk about myself. I suppose you can tell by looking at your books.

No, sir. You must tell what kind of a man you were.

Well, I was what you might call a first-rate fellow. I loved my wife and children. My home was my heaven. My fireside was a paradise to me. To sit there and see the lights

and shadows fall upon the faces of those I loved, was to me a perfect joy.

How did you treat your family?

I never said an unkind word. I never caused my wife, nor one of my children, a moment's pain.

Did you pay your debts?

I did not owe a dollar when I died, and left enough to pay my funeral expenses, and to keep the fierce wolf of want from the door of those I loved.

Did you belong to any church?

No, sir. They were too narrow, pinched and bigoted for me, I never thought that I could be very happy if other folks were damned.

Did you believe in eternal punishment?

Well, no. I always thought that God could get his revenge in far less time.

Did you believe the rib story?

Do you mean the Adam and Eve business?

Yes! Did you believe that?

To tell you the God's truth, that was just a little more than I could swallow.

Away with him to hell!

Next!

Where are you from?

I am from the world too.

Did you belong to any church?

Yes, sir, and to the Young Men's Christian Association besides.

What was your business?

Cashier in a Savings Bank.

Did you ever run away with any money?

Where I came from, a witness could not be compelled to criminate himself.

The law is different here. Answer the question. Did you run away with any money?

Yes, sir.

How much?

One hundred thousand dollars.

Did you take anything else with you?

Yes, sir.

Well, what else?

I took my neighbor's wife—we sang together in the choir.

Did you have a wife and children of your own?

Yes, sir.

And you deserted them?

Yes, sir, but such was my confidence in God that I believed he would take care of them.

Have you heard of them since?

No, sir.

Did you believe in the rib story?

Bless your soul, of course I did. A thousand times I regretted that there were no harder stories in the Bible, so that I could have shown my wealth of faith.

Do you believe the rib story yet?

Yes, with all my heart.

Give him a harp!

Well, as I was saying, God made a woman from Adam's rib. Of course, I do not know exactly how this was done, but when he got the woman finished, he presented her to Adam. He liked her, and they commenced house-keeping in the celebrated Garden of Eden.

Must we, in order to be good, gentle and loving in our lives, believe that the creation of woman was a second thought? That Jehovah really endeavored to induce Adam to take one of the lower animals as an helpmeet for him? After all, is it not possible to live honest and courageous lives without believing these fables? It is said that from Mount Sinai God gave, amid thunderings and lightnings, ten commandments for the guidance of mankind; and yet among them is not found—"Thou shalt believe the Bible."

XVI.

THE GARDEN.

In the first account we are told that God made man, male and female, and said to them "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it."

In the second account only the man is made, and he is put in a garden "to dress it and to keep it." He is not told to subdue the earth, but to dress and keep a garden.

In the first account man is given every herb bearing seed upon the face of the earth and the fruit of every tree for food, and in the second, he is given only the fruit of all the trees in the garden with the exception "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" which was a deadly poison.

There was issuing from this garden a river that was parted into four heads. The first of these, Pison, compassed the whole land of Havilah, the second, Gihon, that compassed the whole land of Ethiopia,

the third, Heddekel, that flowed toward the east of Assyria, and the fourth, the Euphrates. Where are these four rivers now? The brave prow of discovery has visited every sea; the traveler has pressed with weary feet the soil of every clime; and yet there has been found no place from which four rivers sprang. The Euphrates still journeys to the gulf, but where are Pison, Gihon and the mighty Heddekel? Surely by going to the source of the Euphrates we ought to find either these three rivers or their ancient beds. Will some minister when he answers the "Mistakes of Moses" tell us where these rivers are or were? The maps of the world are incomplete without these mighty streams. We have discovered the sources of the Nile; the North Pole will soon be touched by an American; but these three rivers still rise in unknown hills, still flow through unknown lands, and empty still in unknown seas.

The account of these four rivers is what the Rev. David Swing would call "a geographical poem." The orthodox clergy cover the whole affair with the blanket of allegory, while the "scientific" Christian folks talk about cataclysms, upheavals, earthquakes, and vast displacements of the earth's crust.

The question, then arises, whether within the last six thousand years there have been such upheavals and displacements? Talk as you will about the vast "creative periods" that preceded the appearance of man; it is, according to the Bible, only about six thousand years since man was created. Moses gives us the generations of men from Adam until his day, and this account cannot be explained away by calling centuries, days.

According to the second account of creation, these four rivers were made after the creation of man, and consequently they must have been obliterated by convulsions of Nature within six thousand years.

Can we not account for these contradictions, absurdities, and falsehoods by simply saying that although the writer may have done his level best, he failed because he was limited in knowledge, led away by tradition, and depended too implicitly upon the correctness of his imagination? Is not such a course far more reasonable than to insist that all these things are true and must stand though every science shall fall to mental dust?

Can any reason be given for not allowing man to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge? What kind of tree was that? If it is all an allegory, what

truth is sought to be conveyed? Why should God object to that fruit being eaten by man? Why did he put it in the midst of the garden? There was certainly plenty of room outside. If he wished to keep man and this tree apart, why did he put them together? And why, after he had eaten, was he thrust out? The only answer that we have a right to give, is the one given in the Bible. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man has become as one of us to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

Will some minister, some graduate of Andover, tell us what this means? Are we bound to believe it without knowing what the meaning is? If it is a revelation, what does it reveal? Did God object to education then, and does that account for the hostile attitude still assumed by theologians toward all scientific truth? Was there in the garden a tree of life, the eating of which would have rendered Adam and Eve immortal? Is it true, that after the Lord God drove them from the garden that he placed upon its Eastern side "Cherubim and a flaming

sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life?" Are the Cherubim and the flaming sword guarding that tree still, or was it destroyed, or did its rotting trunk, as the Rev. Robert Collyer suggests, "nourish a bank of violets"?

What objection could God have had to the immortality of man? You see that after all, this sacred record, instead of assuring us of immortality, shows us only how we lost it. In this there is assuredly but little consolation.

According to this story we have lost one Eden, but nowhere in the Mosaic books are we told how we may gain another. I know that the Christians tell us there is another, in which all true believers will finally be gathered, and enjoy the unspeakable happiness of seeing the unbelievers in hell; but they do not tell us where it is.

Some commentators say that the Garden of Eden was in the third heaven—some in the fourth, others have located it in the moon, some in the air beyond the attraction of the earth, some on the earth, some under the earth, some inside the earth, some at the North Pole, others at the South, some in Tartary, some in China, some on the borders of

the Ganges, some in the island of Ceylon, some in Armenia, some in Africa, some under the Equator, others in Mesopotamia, in Syria, Persia, Arabia, Babylon, Assyria, Palestine and Europe. Others have contended that it was invisible, that it was an allegory, and must be spiritually understood.

But whether you understand these things or not, you must believe them. You may be laughed at in this world for insisting that God put Adam into a deep sleep and made a woman out of one of his ribs, but you will be crowned and glorified in the next. You will also have the pleasure of hearing the gentlemen howl there, who laughed at you here. While you will not be permitted to take any revenge, you will be allowed to smilingly express your entire acquiescence in the will of God. But where is the new Eden? No one knows. The one was lost, and the other has not been found.

Is it true that man was once perfectly pure and innocent, and that he became degenerate by disobedience? No. The real truth is, and the history of man shows, that he has advanced. Events, like the pendulum of a clock have swung forward and backward, but after all, man, like the hands, has gone steadily on. Man is growing grander. He is not

degenerating. Nations and individuals fail and die, and make room for higher forms. The intellectual horizon of the world widens as the centuries pass. Ideals grow grander and purer; the difference between justice and mercy becomes less and less; liberty enlarges, and love intensifies as the years sweep on. The ages of force and fear, of cruelty and wrong, are behind us and the real Eden is beyond. It is said that a desire for knowledge lost us the Eden of the past; but whether that is true or not, it will certainly give us the Eden of the future.

XVII.

THE FALL.

We are told that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, that he had a conversation with Eve, in which he gave his opinion about the effect of eating certain fruit; that he assured her it was good to eat, that it was pleasant to the eye, that it would make her wise; that she was induced to take some; that she persuaded her husband to try it; that God found it out, that he then cursed the snake; condemning it to crawl and eat the dust; that he multiplied the sorrows of Eve, cursed the ground for Adam's sake, started thistles and thorns, condemned man to eat the herb of the field in the sweat of his face, pronounced the curse of death, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, and drove them out of Eden.

Who, and what was this serpent? Dr. Adam Clarke says :—" The serpent must have walked erect,

for this is necessarily implied in his punishment. That he was endued with the gift of speech, also with reason. That these things were given to this creature. The woman no doubt having often seen him walking erect, and talking and reasoning, therefore she testifies no sort of surprise when he accosts her in the language related in the text. It therefore appears to me that a creature of the ape or orang-outang kind is here intended, and that Satan made use of this creature as the most proper instrument for the accomplishment of his murderous purposes against the life of the soul of man. Under this creature he lay hid, and by this creature he seduced our first parents. Such a creature answers to every part of the description in the text. It is evident from the structure of its limbs and its muscles that it might have been originally designed to walk erect, and that nothing else than the sovereign controlling power could induce it to put down hands—in every respect formed like those of man—and walk like those creatures whose claw-armed parts prove them to have been designed to walk on all fours. The stealthy cunning, and endless variety of the pranks and tricks of these creatures show them even now to be wiser and more intelligent than any other creature,

man alone excepted. Being obliged to walk on all fours and gather their food from the ground, they are literally obliged to eat the dust; and though exceeding cunning, and careful in a variety of instances to separate that part which is wholesome and proper for food from that which is not so, in the article of cleanliness they are lost to all sense of propriety. Add to this their utter aversion to walk upright; it requires the utmost discipline to bring them to it, and scarcely anything offends or irritates them more than to be obliged to do it. Long observation of these animals enables me to state these facts. For earnest, attentive watching, and for chattering and babbling they (the ape) have no fellows in the animal world. Indeed, the ability and propensity to chatter, is all they have left of their original gift of speech, of which they appear to have been deprived at the fall as a part of their punishment."

Here then is the "connecting link" between man and the lower creation. The serpent was simply an orang-outang that spoke Hebrew with the greatest ease, and had the outward appearance of a perfect gentleman, seductive in manner, plausible, polite, and most admirably calculated to deceive.

It never did seem reasonable to me that a long, cold and disgusting snake with an apple in his mouth, could deceive anybody; and I am glad, even at this late date to know that the something that persuaded Eve to taste the forbidden fruit was, at least, in the shape of a man.

Dr. Henry does not agree with the zoological explanation of Mr. Clark, but insists that "it is certain that the devil that beguiled Eve is the old serpent, a malignant by creation, an angel of light, an immediate attendant upon God's throne, but by sin an apostate from his first state, and a rebel against God's crown and dignity. He who attacked our first parents was surely the prince of devils, the ring leader in rebellion. The devil chose to act his part in a serpent, because it is a specious creature, has a spotted, dappled skin, and then, went erect. Perhaps it was a flying serpent which seemed to come from on high, as a messenger from the upper world, one of the seraphim; because the serpent is a subtile creature. What Eve thought of this serpent speaking to her, we are not likely to tell, and, I believe, she herself did not know what to think of it. At first, perhaps, she supposed it might be a good angel, and yet afterwards might suspect something

amiss. The person tempted was a woman, now alone, and at a distance from her husband, but near the forbidden tree. It was the devil's subtlety to assault the weaker vessel with his temptations, as we may suppose her inferior to Adam in knowledge, strength and presence of mind. Some think that Eve received the command not immediately from God, but at second hand from her husband, and might, therefore, be the more easily persuaded to discredit it. It was the policy of the devil to enter into discussion with her when she was alone. He took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree. God permitted Satan to prevail over Eve, for wise and holy ends. Satan teaches men first to doubt, and then to deny. He makes skeptics first, and by degrees makes them atheists."

We are compelled to admit that nothing could be more attractive to a woman than a snake walking erect, with a "spotted, dappled skin," unless it were a serpent with wings. Is it not humiliating to know that our ancestors believed these things? Why should we object to the Darwinian doctrine of descent after this?

Our fathers thought it their duty to believe, thought it a sin to entertain the slightest doubt, and

really supposed that their credulity was exceedingly gratifying to God. To them, the story was entirely real. They could see the garden, hear the babble of waters, smell the perfume of flowers. They believed there was a tree where knowledge grew like plums or pears; and they could plainly see the serpent coiled amid its rustling leaves, coaxing Eve to violate the laws of God.

Where did the serpent come from? On which of the six days was he created? Who made him? Is it possible that God would make a successful rival? He must have known that Adam and Eve would fall. He knew what a snake with a "spotted, dappled skin" could do with an inexperienced woman. Why did he not defend his children? He knew that if the serpent got into the garden, Adam and Eve would sin, that he would have to drive them out, that afterwards the world would be destroyed, and that he himself would die upon the cross.

Again, I ask what and who was this serpent? He was not a man, for only one man had been made. He was not a woman. He was not a beast of the field, because "he was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." He was neither fish nor fowl, nor snake, because he had

the power of speech, and did not crawl upon his belly until after he was cursed. Where did this serpent come from? Why was he not kept out of the garden? Why did not the Lord God take him by the tail and snap his head off? Why did he not put Adam and Eve on their guard about this serpent? They, of course, were not acquainted in the neighborhood, and knew nothing about the serpent's reputation for truth and veracity among his neighbors. Probably Adam saw him when he was looking for "an helpmeet" and gave him a name, but Eve had never met him before. She was not surprised to hear a serpent talk, as that was the first one she had ever met. Every thing being new to her, and her husband not being with her just at that moment, it need hardly excite our wonder that she tasted the fruit by way of experiment. Neither should we be surprised that when she saw it was good and pleasant to the eye, and a fruit to be desired to make one wise, she had the generosity to divide with her husband.

Theologians have filled thousands of volumes with abuse of this serpent, but it seems that he told the exact truth. We are told that this serpent was, in fact, Satan, the greatest enemy of mankind, and that he entered the serpent, appearing to our first

parents in its body. If this is so, why should the serpent have been cursed? Why should God curse the serpent for what had really been done by the devil? Did Satan remain in the body of the serpent, and in some mysterious manner share his punishment? Is it true that when we kill a snake we also destroy an evil spirit, or is there but one devil, and did he perish at the death of the first serpent? Is it on account of that transaction in the Garden of Eden, that all the descendants of Adam and Eve known as Jews and Christians hate serpents?

Do you account for the snake-worship in Mexico, Africa and India in the same way?

What was the form of the serpent when he entered the garden, and in what way did he move from place to place? Did he walk or fly? Certainly he did not crawl, because that mode of locomotion was pronounced upon him as a curse. Upon what food did he subsist before his conversation with Eve? We know that after that he lived upon dust, but what did he eat before? It may be that this is all poetic; and the truest poetry is, according to Touchstone, "the most feigning."

In this same chapter we are informed that "unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make

coats of skins and clothed them." Where did the Lord God get those skins? He must have taken them from the animals; he was a butcher. Then he had to prepare them; he was a tanner. Then he made them into coats; he was a tailor. How did it happen that they needed coats of skins, when they had been perfectly comfortable in a nude condition? Did the "fall" produce a change in the climate?

Is it really necessary to believe this account in order to be happy here, or hereafter? Does it tend to the elevation of the human race to speak of "God" as a butcher, tanner and tailor?

And here, let me say once for all, that when I speak of God, I mean the being described by Moses; the Jehovah of the Jews. There may be for aught I know, somewhere in the unknown shoreless vast, some being whose dreams are constellations and within whose thought the infinite exists. About this being, if such an one exists, I have nothing to say. He has written no books, inspired no barbarians, required no worship, and has prepared no hell in which to burn the honest seeker after truth.

When I speak of God, I mean that god who prevented man from putting forth his hand and taking also of the fruit of the tree of life that he might live

forever; of that god who multiplied the agonies of woman, increased the weary toil of man, and in his anger drowned a world—of that god whose altars reeked with human blood, who butchered babes, violated maidens, enslaved men and filled the earth with cruelty and crime; of that god who made heaven for the few, hell for the many, and who will gloat forever and ever upon the writhings of the lost and damned.

XVIII.

DAMPNESS.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

"That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

"And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

From this account it seems that driving Adam and Eve out of Eden did not have the effect to improve them or their children. On the contrary, the world grew worse and worse. They were under the immediate control and government of God, and he from time to time made known his will; but in spite of this, man continued to increase in crime.

Nothing in particular seems to have been done. Not a school was established. There was no written language. There was not a Bible in the world. The "scheme of salvation" was kept a profound secret. The five points of Calvinism had not been taught. Sunday schools had not been opened. In short, nothing had been done for the reformation of the world. God did not even keep his own sons at home, but allowed them to leave their abode in the

firmament, and make love to the daughters of men. As a result of this, the world was filled with wickedness and giants to such an extent that God regretted "that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Of course God knew when he made man, that he would afterwards regret it. He knew that the people would grow worse and worse until destruction would be the only remedy. He knew that he would have to kill all except Noah and his family, and it is hard to see why he did not make Noah and his family in the first place, and leave Adam and Eve in the original dust. He knew that they would be tempted, that he would have to drive them out of the garden to keep them from eating of the tree of life; that the whole thing would be a failure; that Satan would defeat his plan; that he could not reform the people; that his own sons would corrupt them, and that at last he would have to drown them all except Noah and his family. Why was the Garden of Eden planted? Why was the experiment made? Why were Adam and Eve exposed to the seductive arts of the serpent? Why did God wait until the cool of the day before looking after his children? Why was he not on hand in the morning?

Why did he fill the world with his own children, knowing that he would have to destroy them? And why does this same God tell me how to raise my children when he had to drown his?

It is a little curious that when God wished to reform the ante-diluvian world he said nothing about hell; that he had no revivals, no camp-meetings, no tracts, no outpourings of the Holy Ghost, no baptisms, no noon prayer meetings, and never mentioned the great doctrine of salvation by faith. If the orthodox creeds of the world are true, all those people went to hell without ever having heard that such a place existed. If eternal torment is a fact, surely these miserable wretches ought to have been warned. They were threatened only with water when they were in fact doomed to eternal fire!

Is it not strange that God said nothing to Adam and Eve about a future life; that he should have kept these "infinite verities" to himself and allowed millions to live and die without the hope of heaven, or the fear of hell?

It may be that hell was not made at that time. In the six days of creation nothing is said about the construction of a bottomless pit, and the serpent himself did not make his appearance until after the

creation of man and woman. Perhaps he was made on the first Sunday, and from that fact came, it may be, the old couplet,

> "And Satan still some mischief finds
> For idle hands to do."

The sacred historian failed also to tell us when the cherubim and the flaming sword were made, and said nothing about two of the persons composing the Trinity. It certainly would have been an easy thing to enlighten Adam and his immediate descendants. The world was then only about fifteen hundred and thirty-six years old, and only about three or four generations of men had lived. Adam had been dead only about six hundred and six years, and some of his grandchildren must, at that time, have been alive and well.

It is hard to see why God did not civilize these people. He certainly had the power to use, and the wisdom to devise the proper means. What right has a god to fill a world with fiends? Can there be goodness in this? Why should he make experiments that he knows must fail? Is there wisdom in this? And what right has a man to charge an infinite being with wickedness and folly?

According to Moses, God made up his mind not only to destroy the people, but the beasts and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air. What had the beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds done to excite the anger of God? Why did he repent having made them? Will some Christian give us an explanation of this matter? No good man will inflict unnecessary pain upon a beast; how then can we worship a god who cares nothing for the agonies of the dumb creatures that he made?

Why did he make animals that he knew he would destroy? Does God delight in causing pain? He had the power to make the beasts, and fowls, and creeping things in his own good time and way, and it is to be presumed that he made them according to his wish. Why should he destroy them? They had committed no sin. They had eaten no forbidden fruit, made no aprons, nor tried to reach the tree of life. Yet this god, in blind unreasoning wrath destroyed "all flesh wherein was the breath of life, and every living thing beneath the sky, and every substance wherein was life that he had made."

Jehovah having made up his mind to drown the world, told Noah to make an Ark of gopher wood

three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. A cubit is twenty-two inches; so that the ark was five hundred and fifty feet long, ninety-one feet and eight inches wide and fifty-five feet high. This ark was divided into three stories, and had on top, one window twenty-two inches square. Ventilation must have been one of Jehovah's hobbies. Think of a ship larger than the Great Eastern with only one window, and that but twenty-two inches square!

The ark also had one door set in the side thereof that shut from the outside. As soon as this ship was finished, and properly victualed, Noah received seven days notice to get the animals in the ark.

It is claimed by some of the scientific theologians that the flood was partial, that the waters covered only a small portion of the world, and that consequently only a few animals were in the ark. It is impossible to conceive of language that can more clearly convey the idea of a universal flood than that found in the inspired account. If the flood was only partial, why did God say he would "destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven, and that every thing that is in the earth shall die"? Why did he say "I will destroy man whom I have

created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air"? Why did he say "And every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth"? Would a partial, local flood have fulfilled these threats?

Nothing can be clearer than that the writer of this account intended to convey, and did convey the idea that the flood was universal. Why should Christians try to deprive God of the glory of having wrought the most stupendous of miracles? Is it possible that the Infinite could not overwhelm with waves this atom called the earth? Do you doubt his power, his wisdom or his justice?

Believers in miracles should not endeavor to explain them. There is but one way to explain anything, and that is to account for it by natural agencies. The moment you explain a miracle, it disappears. You should depend not upon explanation, but assertion. You should not be driven from the field because the miracle is shown to be unreasonable. You should reply that all miracles are unreasonable. Neither should you be in the least disheartened if it is shown to be impossible. The possible is not miraculous. You should take the

ground that if miracles were reasonable, and possible, there would be no reward paid for believing them. The Christian has the goodness to believe, while the sinner asks for evidence. It is enough for God to work miracles without being called upon to substantiate them for the benefit of unbelievers.

Only a few years ago, the Christians believed implicitly in the literal truth of every miracle recorded in the Bible. Whoever tried to explain them in some natural way, was looked upon as an infidel in disguise, but now he is regarded as a benefactor. The credulity of the church is decreasing, and the most marvelous miracles are now either "explained," or allowed to take refuge behind the mistakes of the translators, or hide in the drapery of allegory.

In the sixth chapter, Noah is ordered to take "of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort into the ark—male and female." In the seventh chapter the order is changed, and Noah is commanded, according to the Protestant Bible, as follows: "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female."

According to the Catholic Bible, Noah was commanded—"Of all clean beasts take seven and seven, the male and the female. But of the beasts that are unclean two and two, the male and the female. Of the fowls also of the air seven and seven, the male and the female."

For the purpose of belittling this miracle, many commentators have taken the ground that Noah was not ordered to take seven males and seven females of each kind of clean beasts, but seven in all. Many Christians contend that only seven clean beasts of each kind were taken into the ark—three and a half of each sex.

If the account in the seventh chapter means anything, it means *first*, that of each kind of clean beasts, fourteen were to be taken, seven males, and seven females; *second*, that of unclean beasts should be taken, two of each kind, one of each sex, and *third*, that he should take of every kind of fowls, seven of each sex.

It is equally clear that the command in the 19th and 20th verses of the 6th chapter, is to take two of each sort, one male and one female. And this agrees exactly with the account in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of the 7th chapter.

The next question is, how many beasts, fowls and creeping things did Noah take into the ark?

There are now known and classified at least twelve thousand five hundred species of birds. There are still vast territories in China, South America, and Africa unknown to the ornithologist.

Of the birds, Noah took fourteen of each species, according to the 3d verse of the 7th chapter, "Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female," making a total of 175,000 birds.

And right here allow me to ask a question. If the flood was simply a partial flood, why were birds taken into the ark? It seems to me that most birds, attending strictly to business, might avoid a partial flood.

There are at least sixteen hundred and fifty-eight kinds of beasts. Let us suppose that twenty-five of these are clean. Of the clean, fourteen of each kind —seven of each sex—were taken. These amount to 350. Of the unclean—two of each kind, amounting to 3,266. There are some six hundred and fifty species of reptiles. Two of each kind amount to 1,300. And lastly, there are of insects including the creeping things, at least one million species, so that Noah and his folks had to get of these into the ark about 2,000,000.

Animalculæ have not been taken into consideration. There are probably many hundreds of thousands of species ; many of them invisible ; and yet Noah had to pick them out by pairs. Very few people have any just conception of the trouble Noah had.

We know that there are many animals on this continent not found in the Old World. These must have been carried from here to the ark, and then brought back afterwards. Were the peccary, armadillo, ant-eater, sloth, agouti, vampire-bat, marmoset, howling and prehensile-tailed monkey, the raccoon and muskrat carried by the angels from America to Asia? How did they get there? Did the polar bear leave his field of ice and journey toward the tropics? How did he know where the ark was? Did the kangaroo swim or jump from Australia to Asia? Did the giraffe, hippopotamus, antelope and orang-outang journey from Africa in search of the ark? Can absurdities go farther than this?

What had these animals to eat while on the journey? What did they eat while in the ark? What did they drink? When the rain came, of course the rivers ran to the seas, and these seas rose and finally covered the world. The waters of the

seas, mingled with those of the flood, would make all salt. It has been calculated that it required, to drown the world, about eight times as much water as was in all the seas. To find how salt the waters of the flood must have been, take eight quarts of fresh water, and add one quart from the sea. Such water would create instead of allaying thirst. Noah had to take in his ark fresh water for all his beasts, birds and living things. He had to take the proper food for all. How long was he in the ark? Three hundred and seventy-seven days! Think of the food necessary for the monsters of the ante-diluvian world!

Eight persons did all the work. They attended to the wants of 175,000 birds, 3,616 beasts, 1,300 reptiles, and 2,000,000 insects, saying nothing of countless animalculæ.

Well, after they all got in, Noah pulled down the window, God shut the door, and the rain commenced.

How long did it rain?

Forty days.

How deep did the water get?

About five miles and a half.

How much did it rain a day?

Enough to cover the whole world to a depth of about seven hundred and forty-two feet.

Some Christians say that the fountains of the great deep were broken up. Will they be kind enough to tell us what the fountains of the great deep are? Others say that God had vast stores of water in the center of the earth that he used on that occasion. How did these waters happen to run up hill?

Gentlemen, allow me to tell you once more that you must not try to explain these things. Your efforts in that direction do no good, because your explanations are harder to believe than the miracle itself. Take my advice, stick to assertion, and let explanation alone.

Then, as now, Dhawalagiri lifted its crown of snow twenty-nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and on the cloudless cliffs of Chimborazo then, as now, sat the condor; and yet the waters rising seven hundred and twenty-six feet a day—thirty feet an hour, six inches a minute,—rose over the hills, over the volcanoes, filled the vast craters, extinguished all the fires, rose above every mountain peak until the vast world was but one shoreless sea covered with the innumerable dead.

Was this the work of the most merciful God, the father of us all? If there is a God, can there be the slightest danger of incurring his displeasure by doubting even in a reverential way, the truth of such a cruel lie? If we think that God is kinder than he really is, will our poor souls be burned for that?

How many trees can live under miles of water for a year? What became of the soil washed, scattered, dissolved, and covered with the *debris* of a world? How were the tender plants and herbs preserved? How were the animals preserved after leaving the ark? There was no grass except such as had been submerged for a year. There were no animals to be devoured by the carnivorous beasts. What became of the birds that fed on worms and insects? What became of the birds that devoured other birds?

It must be remembered that the pressure of the water when at the highest point—say twenty-nine thousand feet, would have been about eight hundred tons on each square foot. Such a pressure certainly would have destroyed nearly every vestige of vegetable life, so that when the animals came out of the ark, there was not a mouthful of food in

the wide world. How were they supported until the world was again clothed with grass? How were those animals taken care of that subsisted on others? Where did the bees get honey, and the ants seeds? There was not a creeping thing upon the whole earth; not a breathing creature beneath the whole heavens; not a living substance. Where did the tenants of the ark get food?

There is but one answer, if the story is true. The food necessary not only during the year of the flood, but sufficient for many months afterwards, must have been stored in the ark.

There is probably not an animal in the world that will not, in a year, eat and drink ten times its weight. Noah must have provided food and water for a year while in the ark, and food for at least six months after they got ashore. It must have required for a pair of elephants, about one hundred and fifty tons of food and water. A couple of mammoths would have required about twice that amount. Of course there were other monsters that lived on trees; and in a year would have devoured quite a forest.

How could eight persons have distributed this food, even if the ark had been large enough to hold it? How was the ark kept clean? We know how it was ventilated; but what was done with the filth? How were the animals watered? How were some portions of the ark heated for animals from the tropics, and others kept cool for the polar bears? How did the animals get back to their respective countries? Some had to creep back about six thousand miles, and they could only go a few feet a day. Some of the creeping things must have started for the ark just as soon as they were made, and kept up a steady jog for sixteen hundred years. Think of a couple of the slowest snails leaving a point opposite the ark and starting for the plains of Shinar, a distance of twelve thousand miles. Going at the rate of a mile a month, it would take them a thousand years. How did they get there? Polar bears must have gone several thousand miles, and so sudden a change in climate must have been exceedingly trying upon their health. How did they know the way to go? Of course, all the polar bears did not go. Only two were required. Who selected these?

Two sloths had to make the journey from South America. These creatures cannot travel to exceed

three rods a day. At this rate, they would make a mile in about a hundred days. They must have gone about six thousand five hundred miles, to reach the ark. Supposing them to have traveled by a reasonably direct route, in order to complete the journey before Noah hauled in the plank, they must have started several years before the world was created. We must also consider that these sloths had to board themselves on the way, and that most of their time had to be taken up getting food and water. It is exceedingly doubtful whether a sloth could travel six thousand miles and board himself in less than three thousand years.

Volumes might be written upon the infinite absurdity of this most incredible, wicked and foolish of all the fables contained in that repository of the impossible, called the Bible. To me it is a matter of amazement, that it ever was for a moment believed by any intelligent human being.

Dr. Adam Clarke says that "the animals were brought to the ark by the power of God, and their enmities were so removed or suspended, that the lion could dwell peaceably with the lamb, and the wolf sleep happily by the side of the kid. There is no positive evidence that animal food was ever

used before the flood. Noah had the first grant of this kind."

Dr. Scott remarks, "There seems to have been a very extraordinary miracle, perhaps by the ministration of angels, in bringing two of every species to Noah, and rendering them submissive, and peaceful with each other. Yet it seems not to have made any impression upon the hardened spectators. The suspension of the ferocity of the savage beasts during their continuance in the ark, is generally considered as an apt figure of the change that takes place in the disposition of sinners when they enter the true church of Christ."

He believed the deluge to have been universal. In his day science had not demonstrated the absurdity of this belief, and he was not compelled to resort to some theory not found in the Bible. He insisted that "by some vast convulsion, the very bowels of the earth were forced upwards, and rain poured down in cataracts and water-spouts, with no intermission for forty days and nights, and until in every place a universal deluge was effected.

"The presence of God was the only comfort of Noah in his dreary confinement, and in witnessing the dire devastation of the earth and its inhabitants,

and especially of the human species—of his companions, his neighbors, his relatives—all those to whom he had preached, for whom he had prayed and over whom he had wept, and even of many who had helped to build the ark.

"It seems that by a peculiar providential interposition, no animal of any sort died, although they had been shut up in the ark above a year; and it does not appear that there had been any increase of them during that time.

"The Ark was flat-bottomed—square at each end—roofed like a house so that it terminated at the top in the breadth of a cubit. It was divided into many little cabins for its intended inhabitants. Pitched within and without to keep it tight and sweet, and lighted from the upper part. But it must, at first sight, be evident that so large a vessel, thus constructed, with so few persons on board, was utterly unfitted to weather out the deluge, except it was under the immediate guidance and protection of the Almighty."

Dr. Henry furnished the Christian world with the following :—

"As our bodies have in them the humors which, when God pleases, become the springs and seeds of

mortal disease, so the earth had, in its bowels, those waters which, at God's command, sprung up and flooded it.

"God made the world in six days, but he was forty days in destroying it, because he is slow to anger.

"The hostilities between the animals in the ark ceased, and ravenous creatures became mild and manageable, so that the wolf lay down with the lamb, and the lion ate straw like an ox.

"God shut the door of the ark to secure Noah and to keep him safe, and because it was necessary that the door should be shut very close lest the water should break in and sink the ark, and very fast lest others might break it down.

"The waters rose so high that not only the low flat countries were deluged, but to make sure work and that none might escape, the tops of the highest mountains were overflowed fifteen cubits. That is, seven and a half yards, so that salvation was not hoped for from hills or mountains.

"Perhaps some of the people got to the top of the ark, and hoped to shift for themselves there. But either they perished there for want of food, or the dashing rain washed them off the top. Others, it

may be, hoped to prevail with Noah for admission into the ark, and plead old acquaintance.

"'Have we not eaten and drank in thy presence? Hast thou not preached in our streets?' 'Yea,' said Noah, 'many a time, but to little purpose. I called but ye refused; and now it is not in my power to help you. God has shut the door and I cannot open it.'

"We may suppose that some of those who perished in the deluge had themselves assisted Noah, or were employed by him in building the ark.

"Hitherto, man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth. Fruits, herbs and roots, and all sorts of greens, and milk, which was the first grant; but the flood having perhaps washed away much of the fruits of the earth, and rendered them much less pleasant and nourishing, God enlarged the grant and allowed him to eat flesh, which perhaps man never thought of until now, that God directed him to it. Nor had he any more desire to it than the sheep has to suck blood like the wolf. But now, man is allowed to feed upon flesh as freely and safely as upon the green herb."

Such was the debasing influence of a belief in the literal truth of the Bible upon these men, that

their commentaries are filled with passages utterly devoid of common sense.

Dr. Clarke speaking of the mammoth says :

"This animal, an astonishing proof of God's power, he seems to have produced merely to show what he could do. And after suffering a few of them to propagate, he extinguished the race by a merciful providence, that they might not destroy both man and beast.

"We are told that it would have been much easier for God to destroy all the people and make new ones, but he would not want to waste anything and no power or skill should be lavished where no necessity exists.

"The animals were brought to the ark by the power of God."

Again gentlemen, let me warn you of the danger of trying to explain a miracle. Let it alone. Say that you do not understand it, and do not expect to until taught in the schools of the New Jerusalem. The more reasons you give, the more unreasonable the miracle will appear. Through what you say in defence, people are led to think, and as soon as they really think, the miracle is thrown away.

Among the most ignorant nations you will find the most wonders, among the most enlightened, the least. It is with individuals, the same as with nations. Ignorance believes, Intelligence examines and explains.

For about seven months the ark, with its cargo of men, animals and insects, tossed and wandered without rudder or sail upon a boundless sea. At last it grounded on the mountains of Ararat; and about three months afterward the tops of the mountains became visible. It must not be forgotten that the mountain where the ark is supposed to have first touched bottom, was about seventeen thousand feet high. How were the animals from the tropics kept warm? When the waters were abated it would be intensely cold at a point seventeen thousand feet above the level of the sea. May be there were stoves, furnaces, fire places and steam coils in the ark, but they are not mentioned in the inspired narrative. How were the animals kept from freezing? It will not do to say that Ararat was not very high after all.

If you will read the fourth and fifth verses of the eight chapter you will see that although "the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat, it was

not until the first day of the tenth month "that the tops of the mountains could be seen." From this it would seem that the ark must have rested upon about the highest peak in that country. Noah waited forty days more, and then for the first time opened the window and took a breath of fresh air. He then sent out a raven that did not return, then a dove that returned. He then waited seven days and sent forth a dove that returned not. From this he knew that the waters were abated. Is it possible that he could not see whether the waters had gone? Is it possible to conceive of a more perfectly childish way of ascertaining whether the earth was dry?

At last Noah "removed the covering of the ark, and looked and behold the face of the ground was dry," and thereupon God told him to disembark. In his gratitude Noah built an altar and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor and said in his heart that he would not any more curse the ground for man's sake. For saying this in his heart the Lord gives as a reason, not that man is, or will be good, but because "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." God destroyed man because "the wickedness of man was

great in the earth, and *because every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" And he promised for the same reason not to destroy him again. Will some gentleman skilled in theology give us an explanation?

After God had smelled the sweet savor of sacrifice, he seems to have changed his idea as to the proper diet for man. When Adam and Eve were created they were allowed to eat herbs bearing seed, and the fruit of trees. When they were turned out of Eden, God said to them "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field." In the first chapter of Genesis the "green herb" was given for food to the beasts, fowls and creeping things. Upon being expelled from the garden, Adam and Eve, as to their food, were put upon an equality with the lower animals. According to this, the ante-diluvians were vegetarians. This may account for their wickedness and longevity.

After Noah sacrificed, and God smelled the sweet savor; he said—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." Afterward this same God changed his mind again, and divided the beasts and birds into clean and unclean, and made it a crime for man to eat the unclean. Probably food was so

scarce when Noah was let out of the ark that Jehovah generously allowed him to eat anything and everything he could find.

According to the account, God then made a covenant with Noah to the effect that he would not again destroy the world with a flood, and as the attesting witness of this contract, a rainbow was set in the cloud. This bow was placed in the sky so that it might perpetually remind God of his promise and covenant. Without this visible witness and reminder, it would seem that Jehovah was liable to forget the contract, and drown the world again. Did the rainbow originate in this way? Did God put it in the cloud simply to keep his agreement in his memory?

For me it is impossible to believe the story of the deluge. It seems so cruel, so barbaric, so crude in detail, so absurd in all its parts, and so contrary to all we know of law, that even credulity itself is shocked.

Many nations have preserved accounts of a deluge in which all people, except a family or two, were destroyed. Babylon was certainly a city before Jerusalem was founded. Egypt was in the height of her power when there were only seventy Jews in the

world, and India had a literature before the name of Jehovah had passed the lips of superstition. An account of a general deluge "was discovered by George Smith, translated from another account that was written about two thousand years before Christ." Of course it is impossible to tell how long the story had lived in the memory of tradition before it was reduced to writing by the Babylonians. According to this account, which is, without doubt, much older than the one given by Moses, Tamzi built a ship at the command of the god Hea, and put in it his family and the beasts of the field. He pitched the ship inside and outside with bitumen, and as soon as it was finished, there came a flood of rain and "destroyed all life from the face of the whole earth. On the seventh day there was a calm, and the ship stranded on the mountain Nizir." Tamzi waited for seven days more, and then let out a dove. Afterwards, he let out a swallow, and that, as well as the dove returned. Then he let out a raven, and as that did not return, he concluded that the water had dried away, and thereupon left the ship. Then he made an offering to god, or the gods, and "Hea interceded with Bel," so that the earth might never again be drowned.

This is the Babylonian story, told without the contradictions of the original. For in that, it seems, there are two accounts, as well as in the Bible. Is it not a strange coincidence that there should be contradictory accounts mingled in both the Babylonian and Jewish stories?

In the Bible there are two accounts. In one account, Noah was to take two of all beasts, birds, and creeping things into the ark, while in the other, he was commanded to take of clean beasts, and all birds by sevens of each kind. According to one account, the flood only lasted one hundred and fifty days—as related in the third verse of the eighth chapter; while the other account fixes the time at three hundred and seventy-seven days. Both of these accounts cannot be true. Yet in order to be saved, it is not sufficient to believe one of them—you must believe both.

Among the Egyptians there was a story to the effect that the great god Ra became utterly maddened with the people, and deliberately made up his mind that he would exterminate mankind. Thereupon he began to destroy, and continued in the terrible work until blood flowed in streams, when suddenly he ceased, and took an oath that he would not again

destroy the human race. This myth was probably thousands of years old when Moses was born.

So, in India, there was a fable about the flood. A fish warned Manu that a flood was coming. Manu built a "box" and the fish towed it to a mountain and saved all hands.

The same kind of stories were told in Greece, and among our own Indian tribes. At one time the Christian pointed to the fact that many nations told of a flood, as evidence of the truth of the Mosaic account; but now, it having been shown that other accounts are much older, and equally reasonable, that argument has ceased to be of any great value.

It is probable that all these accounts had a common origin. They were likely born of something in nature visible to all nations. The idea of a universal flood, produced by a god to drown the world on account of the sins of the people, is infinitely absurd. The solution of all these stories has been supposed to be, the existence of partial floods in most countries; and for a long time this solution was satisfactory. But the fact that these stories are greatly alike, that only one man is warned, that only one family is saved, that a boat is built, that birds are sent out to find if the water had abated, tend to show

that they had a common origin. Admitting that there were severe floods in all countries; it certainly cannot follow that in each instance only one family would be saved, or that the same story would in each instance be told. It may be urged that the natural tendency of man to exaggerate calamities, might account for this agreement in all the accounts, and it must be admitted that there is some force in the suggestion. I believe, though, that the real origin of all these myths is the same, and that it was originally an effort to account for the sun, moon and stars. The sun and moon were the man and wife, or the god and goddess, and the stars were their children. From a celestial myth, it became a terrestrial one; the air, or ether-ocean became a flood, produced by rain, and the sun moon and stars became man, woman and children.

In the original story, the mountain was the place where in the far east the sky was supposed to touch the earth, and it was there that the ship containing the celestial passengers finally rested from its voyage. But whatever may be the origin of the stories of the flood, whether told first by Hindu, Babylonian or Hebrew, we may rest perfectly assured that they are all equally false.

XIX.

BACCHUS AND BABEL.

As soon as Noah had disembarked, he proceeded to plant a vineyard, and began to be a husbandman; and when the grapes were ripe he made wine and drank of it to excess; cursed his grandson, blessed Shem and Japheth, and after that lived for three hundred and fifty years. What he did during these three hundred and fifty years, we are not told. We never hear of him again. For three hundred and fifty years he lived among his sons, and daughters, and their descendants. He must have been a venerable man. He was the man to whom God had made known his intention of drowning the world. By his efforts, the human race had been saved. He must have been acquainted with Methuselah for six hundred years, and Methuselah was about two hundred and forty years old, when Adam died. Noah must himself have known the history of mankind, and must have been an object of almost infinite interest; and

yet for three hundred and fifty years he is neither directly nor indirectly mentioned. When Noah died, Abraham must have been more than fifty years old; and Shem, the son of Noah, lived for several hundred years after the death of Abraham; and yet he is never mentioned. Noah when he died, was the oldest man in the whole world by about five hundred years; and everybody living at the time of his death knew that they were indebted to him, and yet no account is given of his burial. No monument was raised to mark the spot. This, however, is no more wonderful than the fact that no account is given of the death of Adam or of Eve, nor of the place of their burial. This may all be accounted for by the fact that the language of man was confounded at the building of the tower of Babel, whereby all tradition may have been lost, so that even the sons of Noah could not give an account of their voyage in the ark; and, consequently, some one had to be directly inspired to tell the story, after new languages had been formed.

It has always been a mystery to me how Adam, Eve, and the serpent were taught the same language. Where did they get it? We know now, that it requires a great number of years to form a language;

that it is of exceedingly slow growth. We also know that by language, man conveys to his fellows the impressions made upon him by what he sees, hears, smells and touches. We know that the language of the savage consists of a few sounds, capable of expressing only a few ideas or states of the mind, such as love, desire, fear, hatred, aversion and contempt. Many centuries are required to produce a language capable of expressing complex ideas. It does not seem to me that ideas can be manufactured by a deity and put in the brain of man. These ideas must be the result of observation and experience.

Does anybody believe that God directly taught a language to Adam and Eve, or that he so made them that they, by intuition spoke Hebrew, or some language capable of conveying to each other their thoughts? How did the serpent learn the same language? Did God teach it to him, or did he happen to overhear God, when he was teaching Adam and Eve? We are told in the second chapter of Genesis that God caused all the animals to pass before Adam to see what he would call them. We cannot infer from this that God named the animals and informed Adam what to call them. Adam

named them himself. Where did he get his words? We cannot imagine a man just made out of dust, without the experience of a moment, having the power to put his thoughts in language. In the first place, we cannot conceive of his having any thoughts until he has combined, through experience and observation, the impressions that nature had made upon him through the medium of his senses. We cannot imagine of his knowing anything, in the first instance, about different degrees of heat, nor about darkness, if he was made in the day-time, nor about light, if created at night, until the next morning. Before a man can have what we call thoughts, he must have had a little experience. Something must have happened to him before he can have a thought, and before he can express himself in language. Language is a growth, not a gift. We account now for the diversity of language by the fact that tribes and nations have had different experiences, different wants, different surroundings, and, one result of all these differences is, among other things, a difference in language. Nothing can be more absurd than to account for the different languages of the world by saying that the original language was confounded at the tower of Babel.

According to the Bible, up to the time of the building of that tower, the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, and would have so remained until the present time had not an effort been made to build a tower whose top should reach into heaven. Can any one imagine what objection God would have to the building of such a tower? And how could the confusion of tongues prevent its construction? How could language be confounded? It could be confounded only by the destruction of memory. Did God destroy the memory of mankind at that time, and if so, how? Did he paralyze that portion of the brain presiding over the organs of articulation, so that they could not speak the words, although they remembered them clearly, or did he so touch the brain that they could not hear? Will some theologian, versed in the machinery of the miraculous, tell us in what way God confounded the language of mankind?

Why would the confounding of the language make them separate? Why would they not stay together until they could understand each other? People will not separate, from weakness. When in trouble they come together and desire the assistance

of each other. Why, in this instance, did they separate? What particular ones would naturally come together if nobody understood the language of any other person? Would it not have been just as hard to agree when and where to go, without any language to express the agreement, as to go on with the building of the tower?

Is it possible that any one now believes that the whole world would be of one speech had the language not been confounded at Babel? Do we not know that every word was suggested in some way by the experience of men? Do we not know that words are continually dying, and continually being born; that every language has its cradle and its cemetery—its buds, its blossoms, its fruits and its withered leaves? Man has loved, enjoyed, hated, suffered and hoped, and all words have been born of these experiences.

Why did "the Lord come down to see the city and the tower"? Could he not see them from where he lived or from where he was? Where did he come down from? Did he come in the daytime, or in the night? We are taught now that God is everywhere; that he inhabits immensity; that he is in every atom, and in every star. If this is true,

why did he "come down to see the city and the tower?" Will some theologian explain this?

After all, is it not much easier and altogether more reasonable to say that Moses was mistaken, that he knew little of the science of language, and that he guessed a great deal more than he investigated?

XX.

FAITH IN FILTH.

No light whatever is shed upon what passed in the world after the confounding of language at Babel, until the birth of Abraham. But, before speaking of the history of the Jewish people, it may be proper for me to say that many things are recounted in Genesis, and other books attributed to Moses, of which I do not wish to speak. There are many pages of these books unfit to read, many stories not calculated, in my judgment, to improve the morals of mankind. I do not wish even to call the attention of my readers to these things, except in a general way. It is to be hoped that the time will come when such chapters and passages as cannot be read without leaving the blush of shame upon the cheek of modesty, will be left out, and not published as a part of the Bible. If there is a God, it certainly is blasphemous to attribute to him the authorship of

pages too obscene, beastly and vulgar to be read in the presence of men and women.

The believers in the Bible are loud in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the immoral literature of the world; and yet few books have been published containing more moral filth than this inspired word of God. These stories are not redeemed by a single flash of wit or humor. They never rise above the dull details of stupid vice. For one, I cannot afford to soil my pages with extracts from them; and all such portions of the Scriptures I leave to be examined, written upon, and explained by the clergy. Clergymen may know some way by which they can extract honey from these flowers. Until these passages are expunged from the Old Testament, it is not a fit book to be read by either old or young. It contains pages that no minister in the United States would read to his congregation for any reward whatever. There are chapters that no gentleman would read in the presence of a lady. There are chapters that no father would read to his child. There are narratives utterly unfit to be told; and the time will come when mankind will wonder that such a book was ever called inspired.

I know that in many books besides the Bible, there are immodest lines. Some of the greatest writers have soiled their pages with indecent words. We account for this by saying that the authors were human; that they catered to the taste and spirit of their times. We make excuses, but at the same time regret that in their works they left an impure word. But what shall we say of God? Is it possible that a being of infinite purity—the author of modesty, would smirch the pages of his book with stories lewd, licentious and obscene? If God is the author of the Bible, it is, of course, the standard by which all other books can, and should be measured. If the Bible is not obscene, what book is? Why should men be imprisoned simply for imitating God? The Christian world should never say another word against immoral books until it makes the inspired volume clean. These vile and filthy things were not written for the purpose of conveying and enforcing moral truth, but seem to have been written because the author loved an unclean thing. There is no moral depth below that occupied by the writer or publisher of obscene books, that stain with lust, the loving heart of youth. Such men should be imprisoned and their books destroyed. The literature

of the world should be rendered decent, and no book should be published that cannot be read by, and in the hearing of the best and purest people. But as long as the Bible is considered as the work of God, it will be hard to make all men too good and pure to imitate it; and as long as it is imitated there will be vile and filthy books. The literature of our country will not be sweet and clean until the Bible ceases to be regarded as the production of a god.

We are continually told that the Bible is the very foundation of modesty and morality; while many of its pages are so immodest and immoral that a minister, for reading them in the pulpit, would be instantly denounced as an unclean wretch. Every woman would leave the church, and if the men stayed, it would be for the purpose of chastising the minister.

Is there any saving grace in hypocrisy? Will men become clean in speech by believing that God is unclean? Would it not be far better to admit that the Bible was written by barbarians in a barbarous, coarse and vulgar age? Would it not be safer to charge Moses with vulgarity, instead of God? Is it not altogether more probable that some ignorant Hebrew would write the vulgar words? The Chris-

tians tell me that God is the author of these vile and stupid things? I have examined the question to the best of my ability, and as to God my verdict is :— Not guilty. Faith should not rest in filth.

Every foolish and immodest thing should be expunged from the Bible. Let us keep the good. Let us preserve every great and splendid thought, every wise and prudent maxim, every just law, every elevated idea, and every word calculated to make man nobler and purer, and let us have the courage to throw the rest away. The souls of children should not be stained and soiled. The charming instincts of youth should not be corrupted and defiled. The girls and boys should not be taught that unclean words were uttered by "inspired" lips. Teach them that these words were born of savagery and lust. Teach them that the unclean is the unholy, and that only the pure is sacred.

XXI.

THE HEBREWS.

AFTER language had been confounded and the people scattered, there appeared in the land of Canaan a tribe of Hebrews ruled by a chief or sheik called Abraham. They had a few cattle, lived in tents, practiced polygamy, wandered from place to place, and were the only folks in the whole world to whom God paid the slightest attention. At this time there were hundreds of cities in India filled with temples and palaces; millions of Egyptians worshiped Isis and Osiris, and had covered their land with marvelous monuments of industry, power and skill. But these civilizations were entirely neglected by the Deity, his whole attention being taken up with Abraham and his family.

It seems, from the account, that God and Abraham were intimately acquainted, and conversed frequently upon a great variety of subjects. By the twelfth chapter of Genesis it appears that he made

the following promises to Abraham. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."

After receiving this communication from the Almighty, Abraham went into the land of Canaan, and again God appeared to him and told him to take a heifer three years old, a goat of the same age, a sheep of equal antiquity, a turtle dove and a young pigeon. Whereupon Abraham killed the animals "and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another." And it came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between the raw and bleeding meat. The killing of these animals was a preparation for receiving a visit from God. Should an American missionary in Central Africa find a negro chief surrounded by a butchered heifer, a goat and a sheep, with which to receive a communication from the infinite God, my opinion is, that the missionary would regard the proceeding as the direct result of savagery. And if the chief insisted that he had seen a smoking furnace and a burning lamp going up and down between the

pieces of meat, the missionary would certainly conclude that the chief was not altogether right in his mind.

If the Bible is true, this same God told Abraham to take and sacrifice his only son, or rather the only son of his wife, and a murder would have been committed had not God, just at the right moment, directed him to stay his hand and take a sheep instead.

God made a great number of promises to Abraham, but few of them were ever kept. He agreed to make him the father of a great nation, but he did not. He solemnly promised to give him a great country, including all the land between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates, but he did not.

In due time Abraham passed away, and his son Isaac took his place at the head of the tribe. Then came Jacob, who "watered stock" and enriched himself with the spoil of Laban. Joseph was sold into Egypt by his jealous brethren, where he became one of the chief men of the kingdom, and in a few years his father and brothers left their own country and settled in Egypt. At this time there were seventy Hebrews in the world, counting Joseph and his children. They remained in Egypt two hundred

and fifteen years. It is claimed by some that they were in that country for four hundred and thirty years. This is a mistake. Josephus says they were in Egypt two hundred and fifteen years, and this statement is sustained by the best biblical scholars of all denominations. According to the 17th verse of the 3rd chapter of Galatians, it was four hundred and thirty years from the time the promise was made to Abraham to the giving of the law, and as the Hebrews did not go to Egypt for two hundred and fifteen years after the making of the promise to Abraham, they could in no event have been in Egypt more than two hundred and fifteen years. In our Bible the 40th verse of the 12th chapter of Exodus, is as follows :—

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years."

This passage does not say that the sojourning was all done in Egypt; neither does it say that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt four hundred and thirty years; but it does say that the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. The vatican copy of the Septuagint renders the same passage as follows :—

"The sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years."

The Alexandrian version says :—"The sojourning of the children of Israel which they and their fathers sojourned in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years."

And in the Samaritan Bible we have :—"The sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers which they sojourned in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years."

There were seventy souls when they went down into Egypt, and they remained two hundred and fifteen years, and at the end of that time they had increased to about three million. How do we know that there were three million at the end of two hundred and fifteen years? We know it because we are informed by Moses that "there were six hundred thousand men of war." Now, to each man of war, there must have been at least five other people. In every State in this Union there will be to each voter, five other persons at least, and we all know that there are always more voters than men of war. If there were six hundred thousand men of war, there

must have been a population of at least three million. Is it possible that seventy people could increase to that extent in two hundred and fifteen years? You may say that it was a miracle; but what need was there of working a miracle? Why should God miraculously increase the number of slaves? If he wished miraculously to increase the population, why did he not wait until the people were free?

In 1776, we had in the American Colonies about three millions of people. In one hundred years we doubled four times: that is to say, six, twelve, twenty-four, forty-eight million,—our present population.

We must not forget that during all these years there has been pouring into our country a vast stream of emigration, and that this, taken in connection with the fact that our country is productive beyond all others, gave us only four doubles in one hundred years. Admitting that the Hebrews increased as rapidly without emigration as we, in this country, have with it, we will give to them four doubles each century, commencing with seventy people, and they would have, at the end of two hundred years, a population of seventeen thousand nine hundred and twenty. Giving them another double for the odd

fifteen years and there would be, provided no deaths had occurred, thirty-five thousand eight hundred and forty people. And yet we are told that instead of having this number, they had increased to such an extent that they had six hundred thousand men of war; that is to say, a population of more than three millions?

Every sensible man knows that this account is not, and cannot be true. We know that seventy people could not increase to three million in two hundred and fifteen years.

About this time the Hebrews took a census, and found that there were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three first-born males. It is reasonable to suppose that there were about as many first-born females. This would make forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six first-born children. Now, there must have been about as many mothers as there were first-born children. If there were only about forty-five thousand mothers and three millions of people, the mothers must have had on an average about sixty-six children apiece.

At this time, the Hebrews were slaves, and had been for two hundred and fifteen years. A little while before, an order had been made by the

Egyptians that all the male children of the Hebrews should be killed. One, contrary to this order, was saved in an ark made of bullrushes daubed with slime. This child was found by the daughter of Pharaoh, and was adopted, it seems, as her own, and, may be, was. He grew to be a man, sided with the Hebrews, killed an Egyptian that was smiting a slave, hid the body in the sand, and fled from Egypt to the land of Midian, became acquainted with a priest who had seven daughters, took the side of the daughters against the ill-mannered shepherds of that country, and married Zipporah, one of the girls, and became a shepherd for her father. Afterward, while tending his flock, the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush, and commanded him to go to the king of Egypt and demand from him the liberation of the Hebrews. In order to convince him that the something burning in the bush was actually God, the rod in his hand was changed into a serpent, which, upon being caught by the tail, became again a rod. Moses was also told to put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out it was as leprous as snow. Quite a number of strange things were performed, and others promised. Moses then agreed to go back to Egypt provided his

brother could go with him. Whereupon the Lord appeared to Aaron, and directed him to meet Moses in the wilderness. They met at the mount of God, went to Egypt, gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, spake all the words which God had spoken unto Moses, and did all the signs in the sight of the people. The Israelites believed, bowed their heads and worshiped; and Moses and Aaron went in and told their message to Pharaoh the king.

XXII.

THE PLAGUES.

THREE millions of people were in slavery. They were treated with the utmost rigor, and so fearful were their masters that they might, in time, increase in numbers sufficient to avenge themselves, that they took from the arms of mothers all the male children and destroyed them. If the account given is true, the Egyptians were the most cruel, heartless and infamous people of which history gives any record. God finally made up his mind to free the Hebrews; and for the accomplishment of this purpose he sent, as his agents, Moses and Aaron, to the king of Egypt. In order that the king might know that these men had a divine mission, God gave Moses the power of changing a stick into a serpent, and water into blood. Moses and Aaron went before the king, stating that the Lord God of Israel ordered the king of Egypt to let the Hebrews

go that they might hold a feast with God in the wilderness. Thereupon Pharaoh, the king, enquired who the Lord was, at the same time stating that he had never made his acquaintance, and knew nothing about him. To this they replied that the God of the Hebrews had met with them, and they asked to go a three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto this God, fearing that if they did not he would fall upon them with pestilence or the sword. This interview seems to have hardened Pharaoh, for he ordered the tasks of the children of Israel to be increased; so that the only effect of the first appeal was to render still worse the condition of the Hebrews. Thereupon, Moses returned unto the Lord and said, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

Apparently stung by this reproach, God answered:—

"Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharoah; for with a strong hand shall he let them go; and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land."

God then recounts the fact that he had appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he had established a covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, that he had heard the groanings of the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage; that their groanings had put him in mind of his covenant, and that he had made up his mind to redeem the children of Israel with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments. Moses then spoke to the children of Israel again, but they would listen to him no more. His first effort in their behalf had simply doubled their trouble and they seemed to have lost confidence in his power. Thereupon Jehovah promised Moses that he would make him a god unto Pharaoh, and that Aaron should be his prophet, but at the same time informed him that his message would be of no avail; that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not listen; that he would so harden his heart that he might have an excuse for destroying the Egyptians. Accordingly, Moses and Aaron again went before Pharaoh. Moses said to Aaron; —"Cast down your rod before Pharaoh," which he did, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh not in the least surprised, called for his wise men and his sorcerers, and they threw down their rods and

changed them into serpents. The serpent that had been changed from Aaron's rod was, at this time crawling upon the floor, and it proceeded to swallow the serpents that had been produced by the magicians of Egypt. What became of these serpents that were swallowed, whether they turned back into sticks again, is not stated. Can we believe that the stick was changed into a real living serpent, or did it assume simply the appearance of a serpent? If it bore only the appearance of a serpent it was a deception, and could not rise above the dignity of legerdemain. Is it necessary to believe that God is a kind of prestigiator—a sleight-of-hand performer, a magician or sorcerer? Can it be possible that an infinite being would endeavor to secure the liberation of a race by performing a miracle that could be equally performed by the sorcerers and magicians of a barbarian king?

Not one word was said by Moses or Aaron as to the wickedness of depriving a human being of his liberty. Not a word was said in favor of liberty. Not the slightest intimation that a human being was justly entitled to the product of his own labor. Not a word about the cruelty of masters who would destroy even the babes of slave mothers. It seems

to me wonderful that this God did not tell the king of Egypt that no nation could enslave another, without also enslaving itself; that it was impossible to put a chain around the limbs of a slave, without putting manacles upon the brain of the master. Why did he not tell him that a nation founded upon slavery could not stand? Instead of declaring these things, instead of appealing to justice, to mercy and to liberty, he resorted to feats of jugglery. Suppose we wished to make a treaty with a barbarous nation, and the President should employ a sleight-of-hand performer as envoy extraordinary, and instruct him, that when he came into the presence of the savage monarch, he should cast down an umbrella or a walking stick, which would change into a lizard or a turtle; what would we think? Would we not regard such a performance as beneath the dignity even of a President? And what would be our feelings if the savage king sent for his sorcerers and had them perform the same feat? If such things would appear puerile and foolish in the President of a great republic, what shall be said when they were resorted to by the creator of all worlds? How small, how contemptible such a God appears! Pharaoh, it seems, took about this view of the

matter, and he would not be persuaded that such tricks were performed by an infinite being.

Again, Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh as he was going to the river's bank, and the same rod which had changed to a serpent, and, by this time changed back, was taken by Aaron, who, in the presence of Pharaoh, smote the water of the river, which was immediately turned to blood, as well as all the water in all the streams, ponds, and pools, as well as all water in vessels of wood and vessels of stone in the entire land of Egypt. As soon as all the waters in Egypt had been turned into blood, the magicians of that country did the same with their enchantments. We are not informed where they got the water to turn into blood, since all the water in Egypt had already been so changed. It seems from the account that the fish in the Nile died, and the river emitted a stench, and there was not a drop of water in the land of Egypt that had not been changed into blood. In consequence of this, the Egyptians digged "around about the river" for water to drink. Can we believe this story? Is it necessary to salvation to admit that all the rivers, pools, ponds and lakes of a country were changed into blood, in order that a king might be induced to

allow the children of Israel the privilege of going a three days journey into the wilderness to make sacrifices to their God?

It seems from the account that Pharaoh was told that the God of the Hebrews would, if he refused to let the Israelites go, change all the waters of Egypt into blood, and that, upon his refusal, they were so changed. This had, however, no influence upon him, for the reason that his own magicians did the same. It does not appear that Moses and Aaron expressed the least surprise at the success of the Egyptian sorcerers. At that time it was believed that each nation had its own god. The only claim that Moses and Aaron made for their God was, that he was the greatest and most powerful of all the gods, and that with anything like an equal chance he could vanquish the deity of any other nation.

After the waters were changed to blood Moses and Aaron waited for seven days. At the end of that time God told Moses to again go to Pharaoh and demand the release of his people, and to inform him that, if he refused, God would strike all the borders of Egypt with frogs. That he would make frogs so plentiful that they would go into the houses of Pharaoh, into his bedchamber, upon his bed, into

the houses of his servants, upon his people, into their ovens, and even into their kneading troughs. This threat had no effect whatever upon Pharaoh. And thereupon Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. The magicians of Egypt did the same, and with their enchantments brought more frogs upon the land of Egypt.

These magicians do not seem to have been original in their ideas, but so far as imitation is concerned, were perfect masters of their art. The frogs seem to have made such an impression upon Pharaoh that he sent for Moses and asked him to entreat the Lord that he would take away the frogs. Moses agreed to remove them from the houses and the land, and allow them to remain only in the rivers. Accordingly the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the villages, and out of the fields, and the people gathered them together in heaps. As soon as the frogs had left the houses and fields, the heart of Pharaoh became again hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

Aaron then, according to the command of God, stretched out his hand, holding the rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and

in beast, and all the dust became lice throughout the land of Egypt. Pharaoh again sent for his magicians, and they sought to do the same with their enchantments, but they could not. Whereupon the sorcerers said unto Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God."

Notwithstanding this, however, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go. God then caused a grievous swarm of flies to come into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt, to such an extent that the whole land was corrupted by reason of the flies. But into that part of the country occupied by the children of Israel there came no flies. Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them: "Go, and sacrifice to your God in this land." They were not willing to sacrifice in Egypt, and asked permission to go on a journey of three days into the wilderness. To this Pharaoh acceded, and in consideration of this Moses agreed to use his influence with the Lord to induce him to send the flies out of the country. He accordingly told the Lord of the bargain he had made with Pharaoh, and the Lord agreed to the compromise, and removed the flies from Pharaoh and from his servants and from his people, and there

remained not a single fly in the land of Egypt. As soon as the flies were gone, Pharaoh again changed his mind, and concluded not to permit the children of Israel to depart. The Lord then directed Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him that if he did not allow the children of Israel to depart, he would destroy his cattle, his horses, his camels and his sheep; that these animals would be afflicted with a grievous disease, but that the animals belonging to the Hebrews should not be so afflicted. Moses did as he was bid. On the next day all the cattle of Egypt died; that is to say, all the horses, all the asses, all the camels, all the oxen and all the sheep; but of the animals owned by the Israelites, not one perished. This disaster had no effect upon Pharaoh, and he still refused to let the children of Israel go. The Lord then told Moses and Aaron to take some ashes out of a furnace, and told Moses to sprinkle them toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh; saying that the ashes should become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and should be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast throughout all the land.

How these boils breaking out with blains, upon cattle that were already dead, should affect Pharaoh,

is a little hard to understand. It must not be forgotten that *all* the cattle and all beasts had died with the murrain before the boils had broken out.

This was a most decisive victory for Moses and Aaron. The boils were upon the magicians to that extent that they could not stand before Moses. But it had no effect upon Pharaoh, who seems to have been a man of great firmness. The Lord then instructed Moses to get up early in the morning and tell Pharaoh that he would stretch out his hand and smite his people with a pestilence, and would, on the morrow, cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as had never been known in the land of Egypt. He also told Moses to give notice, so that they might get all the cattle that were in the fields under cover. It must be remembered that all these cattle had recently died of the murrain, and their dead bodies had been covered with boils and blains. This, however, had no effect, and Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder, and hail and lightning, and fire that ran along the ground, and the hail fell upon all the land of Egypt, and all that were in the fields, both man and beast, were smitten, and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the

country except that portion inhabited by the children of Israel; there, there was no hail.

During this hail storm Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and admitted that he had sinned, that the Lord was righteous, and that the Egyptians were wicked, and requested them to ask the Lord that there be no more thunderings and hail, and that he would let the Hebrews go. Moses agreed that as soon as he got out of the city he would stretch forth his hands unto the Lord, and that the thunderings should cease and the hail should stop. But, when the rain and the hail and the thundering ceased, Pharaoh concluded that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Again, God sent Moses and Aaron, instructing them to tell Pharaoh that if he refused to let the people go, the face of the earth would be covered with locusts, so that man would not be able to see the ground, and that these locusts would eat the residue of that which escaped from the hail; that they would eat every tree out of the field; that they would fill the houses of Pharaoh and the houses of all his servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians. Moses delivered the message, and went out from Pharaoh. Some of Pharaoh's servants entreated

their master to let the children of Israel go. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and asked them, who wished to go into the wilderness to sacrifice. They replied that they wished to go with the young and old; with their sons and daughters, with flocks and herds. Pharaoh would not consent to this, but agreed that the men might go. Thereupon Pharaoh drove Moses and Aaron out of his sight. Then God told Moses to stretch forth his hand upon the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they might come up and eat every herb, even all that the hail had left. "And Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind brought the locusts; and they came up over all the land of Egypt and rested upon all the coasts covering the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, and there remained not any green thing on the trees or in the herbs of the field throughout the land of Egypt." Pharaoh then called for Moses and Aaron in great haste, admitted that he had sinned against the Lord their God and against them, asked their forgiveness and

requested them to intercede with God that he might take away the locusts. They went out from his presence and asked the Lord to drive the locusts away, "And the Lord made a strong west wind which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea so that there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

As soon as the locusts were gone, Pharaoh changed his mind, and, in the language of the sacred text, "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go."

The Lord then told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven that there might be darkness over the land of Egypt, "even darkness which might be felt." "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness over the land of Egypt for three days during which time they saw not each other, neither arose any of the people from their places for three days; but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

It strikes me that when the land of Egypt was covered with thick darkness—so thick that it could be felt, and when light was in the dwellings of the Israelites, there could have been no better time for the Hebrews to have left the country.

Pharaoh again called for Moses, and told him that his people could go and serve the Lord, provided they would leave their flocks and herds. Moses would not agree to this, for the reason that they needed the flocks and herds for sacrifices and burnt offerings, and he did not know how many of the animals God might require, and for that reason he could not leave a single hoof. Upon the question of the cattle, they divided, and Pharaoh again refused to let the people go. God then commanded Moses to tell the Hebrews to borrow, each of his neighbor, jewels of silver and gold. By a miraculous interposition the Hebrews found favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they loaned the articles asked for. After this, Moses again went to Pharaoh and told him that all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh upon the throne, unto the first-born of the maid-servant who was behind the mill, as well as the first-born of beasts, should die.

As all the beasts had been destroyed by disease and hail, it is troublesome to understand the meaning of the threat as to their first-born.

Preparations were accordingly made for carrying this frightful threat into execution. Blood was put on the door-posts of all houses inhabited by Hebrews,

so that God, as he passed through that land, might not be mistaken and destroy the first-born of the Jews. "And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne, and the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead."

What had these children done? Why should the babes in the cradle be destroyed on account of the crime of Pharaoh? Why should the cattle be destroyed because man had enslaved his brother? In those days women and children and cattle were put upon an exact equality, and all considered as the property of the men; and when man in some way excited the wrath of God, he punished them by destroying all their cattle, their wives, and their little ones. Where can words be found bitter enough to describe a god who would kill wives and babes because husbands and fathers had failed to keep his law? Every good man, and every good woman, must hate and despise such a deity.

Upon the death of all the first-born Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and not only gave his consent that they might go with the Hebrews into the wilderness, but besought them to go at once.

Is it possible that an infinite God, creator of all worlds and sustainer of all life, said to Pharaoh, "If you do not let my people go, I will turn all the water of your country into blood," and that upon the refusal of Pharaoh to release the people, God did turn all the waters into blood? Do you believe this?

Do you believe that Pharaoh even after all the water was turned to blood, refused to let the Hebrews go, and that thereupon God told him he would cover his land with frogs? Do you believe this?

Do you believe that after the land was covered with frogs Pharaoh still refused to let the people go, and that God then said to him, "I will cover you and all your people with lice?" Do you believe God would make this threat?

Do you also believe that God told Pharaoh, "If you do not let these people go, I will fill all your houses and cover your country with flies?" Do you believe God makes such threats as this?

Of course God must have known that turning the waters into blood, covering the country with frogs, infesting all flesh with lice, and filling all houses with flies, would not accomplish his object, and that all these plagues would have no effect whatever upon the Egyptian king.

Do you believe that, failing to accomplish anything by the flies, God told Pharaoh that if he did not let the people go he would kill his cattle with murrain? Does such a threat sound God-like?

Do you believe that, failing to effect anything by killing the cattle, this same God then threatened to afflict all the people with boils, including the magicians who had been rivaling him in the matter of miracles; and failing to do anything by boils, that he resorted to hail? Does this sound reasonable? The hail experiment having accomplished nothing, do you believe that God murdered the first-born of animals and men? Is it possible to conceive of anything more utterly absurd, stupid, revolting, cruel and senseless, than the miracles said to have been wrought by the Almighty for the purpose of inducing Pharaoh to liberate the children of Israel?

Is it not altogether more reasonable to say that the Jewish people, being in slavery, accounted for

the misfortunes and calamities, suffered by the Egyptians, by saying that they were the judgments of God?

When the Armada of Spain was wrecked and scattered by the storm, the English people believed that God had interposed in their behalf, and publicly gave thanks. When the battle of Lepanto was won, it was believed by the Catholic world that the victory was given in answer to prayer. So, our fore-fathers in their Revolutionary struggle saw, or thought they saw, the hand of God, and most firmly believed that they achieved their independence by the interposition of the Most High.

Now, it may be that while the Hebrews were enslaved by the Egyptians, there were plagues of locusts and flies. It may be that there were some diseases by which many of the cattle perished. It may be that a pestilence visited that country so that in nearly every house there was some one dead. If so, it was but natural for the enslaved and superstitious Jews to account for these calamities by saying that they were punishments sent by their God. Such ideas will be found in the history of every country.

For a long time the Jews held these opinions, and they were handed from father to son simply by

tradition. By the time a written language had been produced, thousands of additions had been made, and numberless details invented; so that we have not only an account of the plagues suffered by the Egyptians, but the whole woven into a connected story, containing the threats made by Moses and Aaron, the miracles wrought by them, the promises of Pharaoh, and finally the release of the Hebrews, as a result of the marvelous things performed in their behalf by Jehovah.

In any event it is infinitely more probable that the author was misinformed, than that the God of this universe was guilty of these childish, heartless and infamous things. The solution of the whole matter is this:—Moses was mistaken.

XXIII.

THE FLIGHT.

THREE millions of people, with their flocks and herds, with borrowed jewelry and raiment, with unleavened dough in kneading troughs bound in their clothes upon their shoulders, in one night commenced their journey for the land of promise. We are not told how they were informed of the precise time to start. With all the modern appliances, it would require months of time to inform three millions of people of any fact.

In this vast assemblage there were six hundred thousand men of war, and with them were the old, the young, the diseased and helpless. Where were those people going? They were going to the desert of Sinai, compared with which Sahara is a garden. Imagine an ocean of lava torn by storm and vexed by tempest, suddenly gazed at by a Gorgon and changed instantly to stone! Such was the desert of Sinai.

All of the civilized nations of the world could not feed and support three millions of people on the desert of Sinai for forty years. It would cost more than one hundred thousand millions of dollars, and would bankrupt Christendom. They had with them their flocks and herds, and the sheep were so numerous that the Israelites sacrificed, at one time, more than one hundred and fifty thousand first-born lambs. How were these flocks supported? What did they eat? Where were meadows and pastures for them? There was no grass, no forests—nothing! There is no account of its having rained baled hay, nor is it even claimed that they were miraculously fed. To support these flocks, millions of acres of pasture would have been required. God did not take the Israelites through the land of the Philistines, for fear that when they saw the people of that country they would return to Egypt, but he took them by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea, going before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night, in a pillar of fire.

When it was told Pharaoh that the people had fled, he made ready and took six hundred chosen

chariots of Egypt, and pursued after the children of Israel, overtaking them by the sea. As all the animals had long before that time been destroyed, we are not informed where Pharaoh obtained the horses for his chariots. The moment the children of Israel saw the hosts of Pharaoh, although they had six hundred thousand men of war, they immediately cried unto the Lord for protection. It is wonderful to me that a land that had been ravaged by the plagues described in the Bible, still had the power to put in the field an army that would carry terror to the hearts of six hundred thousand men of war. Even with the help of God, it seems, they were not strong enough to meet the Egyptians in the open field, but resorted to strategy. Moses again stretched forth his wonderful rod over the waters of the Red Sea, and they were divided, and the Hebrews passed through on dry land, the waters standing up like a wall on either side. The Egyptians pursued them; "and in the morning watch the Lord looked into the hosts of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire," and proceeded to take the wheels off their chariots. As soon as the wheels were off, God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. Moses did so, and immediately "the waters returned and covered

the chariots and horsemen and all the hosts of Pharaoh that came into the sea, and there remained not so much as one of them."

This account may be true, but still it hardly looks reasonable that God would take the wheels off the chariots. How did he do it? Did he pull out the linch-pins, or did he just take them off by main force?

What a picture this presents to the mind! God the creator of the universe, maker of every shining, glittering star, engaged in pulling off the wheels of wagons, that he might convince Pharaoh of his greatness and power!

Where were these people going? They were going to the promised land. How large a country was that? About twelve thousand square miles. About one-fifth the size of the State of Illinois. It was a frightful country, covered with rocks and desolation. How many people were in the promised land already? Moses tells us there were seven nations in that country mightier than the Jews. As there were at least three millions of Jews, there must have been at least twenty-one millions of people already in that country. These had to be driven out in order that room might be made for the chosen people of God.

It seems, however, that God was not willing to take the children of Israel into the promised land immediately. They were not fit to inhabit the land of Canaan; so he made up his mind to allow them to wander upon the desert until all except two, who had left Egypt, should perish. Of all the slaves released from Egyptian bondage, only two were allowed to reach the promised land!

As soon as the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea, they found themselves without food, and with water unfit to drink by reason of its bitterness, and they began to murmur against Moses, who cried unto the Lord, and "the Lord showed him a tree." Moses cast this tree into the waters, and they became sweet. "And it came to pass in the morning the dew lay around about the camp; and when the dew that lay was gone, behold, upon the face of the wilderness lay a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost upon the ground. And Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." This manna was a very peculiar thing. It would melt in the sun, and yet they could cook it by seething and baking. One would as soon think of frying snow or of broiling icicles. But this manna had another remarkable quality. No matter how much or little

any person gathered, he would have an exact omer; if he gathered more, it would shrink to that amount, and if he gathered less, it would swell exactly to that amount. What a magnificent substance manna would be with which to make a currency—shrinking and swelling according to the great laws of supply and demand!

"Upon this manna the children of Israel lived for forty years, until they came to a habitable land. With this meat were they fed until they reached the borders of the land of Canaan." We are told in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers, that the people at last became tired of the manna, complained of God, and asked Moses why he brought them out of the land of Egypt to die in the wilderness. And they said:—"There is no bread, nor have we any water. Our soul loatheth this light food."

We are told by some commentators that the Jews lived on manna for forty years; by others that they lived upon it for only a short time. As a matter of fact the accounts differ, and this difference is the opportunity for commentators. It also allows us to exercise faith in believing that both accounts

are true. If the accounts agreed, and were reasonable, they would be believed by the wicked and unregenerated. But as they are different and unreasonable, they are believed only by the good. Whenever a statement in the Bible is unreasonable, and you believe it, you are considered quite a good Christian. If the statement is grossly absurd and infinitely impossible, and you still believe it, you are a saint.

The children of Israel were in the desert, and they were out of water. They had nothing to eat but manna, and this they had had so long that the soul of every person abhorred it. Under these circumstances they complained to Moses. Now, as God is infinite, he could just as well have furnished them with an abundance of the purest and coolest of water, and could, without the slightest trouble to himself, have given them three excellent meals a day, with a generous variety of meats and vegetables, it is very hard to see why he did not do so. It is still harder to conceive why he fell into a rage when the people mildly suggested that they would like a change of diet. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, nothing but manna. No doubt they did the best they could by

cooking it in different ways, but in spite of themselves they began to loathe its sight and taste, and so they asked Moses to use his influence to secure a change in the bill of fare.

Now, I ask, whether it was unreasonable for the Jews to suggest that a little meat would be very gratefully received? It seems, however, that as soon as the request was made, this God of infinite mercy became infinitely enraged, and instead of granting it, went into partnership with serpents, for the purpose of punishing the hungry wretches to whom he had promised a land flowing with milk and honey.

Where did these serpents come from? How did God convey the information to the serpents, that he wished them to go to the desert of Sinai and bite some Jews? It may be urged that these serpents were created for the express purpose of punishing the children of Israel for having had the presumption, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more.

There is another account in the eleventh chapter of Numbers, of the people murmuring because of their food. They remembered the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic of Egypt, and they asked for meat. The people went

to the tent of Moses and asked him for flesh. Moses cried unto the Lord and asked him why he did not take care of the multitude. God thereupon agreed that they should have meat, not for a day or two, but for a month, until the meat should come out of their nostrils and become loathsome to them. He then caused a wind to bring quails from beyond the sea, and cast them into the camp, on every side of the camp around about for the space of a days journey. And the people gathered them, and while the flesh was yet between their teeth the wrath of God being provoked against them, struck them with an exceeding great plague. Serpents, also, were sent among them, and thousands perished for the crime of having been hungry.

The Rev. Alexander Cruden commenting upon this account says :—

"God caused a wind to rise that drove the quails within and about the camp of the Israelites; and it is in this that the miracle consists, that they were brought so seasonably to this place, and in so great numbers as to suffice above a million of persons above a month. Some authors affirm, that in those eastern and southern countries, quails are innumerable, so that in one part of Italy within the compass

of five miles, there were taken about an hundred thousand of them every day for a month together; and that sometimes they fly so thick over the sea, that being weary they fall into ships, sometimes in such numbers, that they sink them with their weight."

No wonder Mr. Cruden believed the Mosaic account.

Must we believe that God made an arrangement with hornets for the purpose of securing their services in driving the Canaanites from the land of promise? Is this belief necessary unto salvation? Must we believe that God said to the Jews that he would send hornets before them to drive out the Canaanites, as related in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, and the second chapter of Deuteronomy? How would the hornets know a Canaanite? In what way would God put it in the mind of a hornet to attack a Canaanite? Did God create hornets for that especial purpose, implanting an instinct to attack a Canaanite, but not a Hebrew? Can we conceive of the Almighty granting letters of marque and reprisal to hornets? Of course it is admitted that nothing in the world would be better calculated to make a man leave his native land than a few hornets. Is it

possible for us to believe that an infinite being would resort to such expedients in order to drive the Canaanites from their country? He could just as easily have spoken the Canaanites out of existence as to have spoken the hornets in. In this way a vast amount of trouble, pain and suffering would have been saved. Is it possible that there is, in this country, an intelligent clergyman who will insist that these stories are true; that we must believe them in in order to be good people in this world, and glorified souls in the next?

We are also told that God instructed the Hebrews to kill the Canaanites slowly, giving as a reason that the beasts of the field might increase upon his chosen people. When we take into consideration the fact that the Holy Land contained only about eleven or twelve thousand square miles, and was at that time inhabited by at least twenty-one millions of people, it does not seem reasonable that the wild beasts could have been numerous enough to cause any great alarm. The same ratio of population would give to the State of Illinois at least one hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants. Can anybody believe that, under such circumstances, the danger from wild beasts could be very great? What would we think

of a general, invading such a State, if he should order his soldiers to kill the people slowly, lest the wild beasts might increase upon them? Is it possible that a God capable of doing the miracles recounted in the Old Testament could not, in some way, have disposed of the wild beasts? After the Canaanites were driven out, could he not have employed the hornets to drive out the wild beasts? Think of a God that could drive twenty-one millions of people out of the promised land, could raise up innumerable stinging flies, and could cover the earth with fiery serpents, and yet seems to have been perfectly powerless against the wild beasts of the land of Canaan!

Speaking of these hornets, one of the good old commentators, whose views have long been considered of great value by the believers in the inspiration of the Bible, uses the following language: —"Hornets are a sort of strong flies, which the Lord used as instruments to plague the enemies of his people. They are of themselves very troublesome and mischievous, and those the Lord made use of were, it is thought, of an extraordinary bigness and perniciousness. It is said they live as the wasps, and that they have a king or captain, and pestilent

stings as bees, and that, if twenty-seven of them sting man or beast, it is certain death to either. Nor is it strange that such creatures did drive out the Canaanites from their habitations; for many heathen writers give instances of some people driven from their seats by frogs, others by mice, others by bees and wasps. And it is said that a Christian city, being besieged by Sapores, king of Persia, was delivered by hornets; for the elephants and beasts being stung by them, waxed unruly, and so the whole army fled."

Only a few years ago, all such stories were believed by the Christian world; and it is a historical fact, that Voltaire was the third man of any note in Europe, who took the ground that the mythologies of Greece and Rome were without foundation. Until his time, most Christians believed as thoroughly in the miracles ascribed to the Greek and Roman gods as in those of Christ and Jehovah. The Christian world cultivated credulity, not only as one of the virtues, but as the greatest of them all. But, when Luther and his followers left the Church of Rome, they were compelled to deny the power of the Catholic Church, at that time, to suspend the laws of nature, but took the ground that such power

ceased with the apostolic age. They insisted that all things now happened in accordance with the laws of nature, with the exception of a few special interferences in favor of the Protestant Church in answer to prayer. They taught their children a double philosophy : by one, they were to show the impossibility of Catholic miracles, because opposed to the laws of nature ; by the other, the probability of the miracles of the apostolic age, because they were in conformity with the statements of the Scriptures. They had two foundations : one, the law of nature, and the other, the word of God. The Protestants have endeavored to carry on this double process of reasoning, and the result has been a gradual increase of confidence in the law of nature, and a gradual decrease of confidence in the word of God.

We are told, in this inspired account, that the clothing of the Jewish people did not wax old, and that their shoes refused to wear out. Some commentators have insisted that angels attended to the wardrobes of the Hebrews, patched their garments, and mended their shoes. Certain it is, however, that the same clothes lasted them for forty years, during the entire journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. Little boys starting out with their first

pantaloons, grew as they traveled, and their clothes grew with them.

Can it be necessary to believe a story like this? Will men make better husbands, fathers, neighbors, and citizens, simply by giving credence to these childish and impossible things? Certainly an infinite God could have transported the Jews to the Holy Land in a moment, and could, as easily, have removed the Canaanites to some other country. Surely there was no necessity for doing thousands and thousands of petty miracles, day after day for forty years, looking after the clothes of three millions of people, changing the nature of wool and linen and leather, so that they would not "wax old." Every step, every motion, would wear away some part of the clothing, some part of the shoes. Were these parts, so worn away, perpetually renewed, or was the nature of things so changed that they could not wear away? We know that whenever matter comes in contact with matter, certain atoms, by abrasion, are lost. Were these atoms gathered up every night by angels, and replaced on the soles of the shoes, on the elbows of coats, and on the knees of pantaloons, so that the next morning they would be precisely in the condi-

tion they were on the morning before? There must be a mistake somewhere.

Can we believe that the real God, if there is one, ever ordered a man to be killed simply for making hair oil, or ointment? We are told in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, that the Lord commanded Moses to take myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia, and olive oil, and make a holy ointment for the purpose of anointing the tabernacle, tables, candlesticks and other utensils, as well as Aaron and his sons; saying, at the same time, that whosoever compounded any like it, or whoever put any of it on a stranger, should be put to death. In the same chapter, the Lord furnishes Moses with a recipe for making a perfume, saying, that whoever should make any which smelled like it, should be cut off from his people. This, to me, sounds so unreasonable that I cannot believe it. Why should an infinite God care whether mankind made ointments and perfumes like his or not? Why should the Creator of all things threaten to kill a priest who approached his altar without having washed his hands and feet? These commandments and these penalties would disgrace the vainest tyrant that ever sat, by chance, upon a throne. There must be some mistake. I cannot

believe that an infinite Intelligence appeared to Moses upon Mount Sinai having with him a variety of patterns for making a tabernacle, tongs, snuffers and dishes. Neither can I believe that God told Moses how to cut and trim a coat for a priest. Why should a God care about such things? Why should he insist on having buttons sewed in certain rows, and fringes of a certain color? Suppose an intelligent civilized man was to overhear, on Mount Sinai, the following instructions from God to Moses:—

"You must consecrate my priests as follows:—You must kill a bullock for a sin offering, and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of the bullock. Then you must take the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with your finger, and pour some blood at the bottom of the altar to make a reconciliation; and of the fat that is upon the inwards, the caul above the liver and two kidneys, and their fat, and burn them upon the altar. You must get a ram for a burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands upon the head of the ram. Then you must kill it and sprinkle the blood upon the altar, and cut the ram into pieces, and burn the head, and the pieces, and the fat, and wash the inwards and the lungs in water

and then burn the whole ram upon the altar for a sweet savor unto me. Then you must get another ram, and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of that, then kill it and take of its blood, and put it on the top of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. And you must also put a little of the blood upon the top of the right ears of Aaron's sons, and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the great toes of their right feet. And then you must take of the fat that is on the inwards, and the caul above the liver and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder, and out of a basket of unleavened bread you must take one unleavened cake and another of oil bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat of the right shoulder. And you must take of the anointing oil, and of the blood, and sprinkle it on Aaron, and on his garments, and on his sons' garments, and sanctify them and all their clothes."—Do you believe that he would have even suspected that the creator of the universe was talking?

Can any one now tell why God commanded the Jews, when they were upon the desert of Sinai, to plant trees, telling them at the same time that they

must not eat any of the fruit of such trees until after the fourth year? Trees could not have been planted in that desert, and if they had been, they could not have lived. Why did God tell Moses, while in the desert, to make curtains of fine linen? Where could he have obtained his flax? There was no land upon which it could have been produced. Why did he tell him to make things of gold, and silver, and precious stones, when they could not have been in possession of these things? There is but one answer, and that is, the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after the Jews had settled in the Holy Land, and hundreds of years after Moses was dust and ashes.

When the Jews had a written language, and that must have been long after their flight from Egypt, they wrote out their history and their laws. Tradition had filled the infancy of the nation with miracles and special interpositions in their behalf by Jehovah. Patriotism would not allow these wonders to grow small, and priestcraft never denied a miracle. There were traditions to the effect that God had spoken face to face with Moses; that he had given him the tables of the law, and had, in a thousand ways, made known his will; and whenever the priests wished to

make new laws, or amend old ones, they pretended to have found something more that God said to Moses at Sinai. In this way obedience was more easily secured. Only a very few of the people could read, and, as a consequence, additions, interpolations and erasures had no fear of detection. In this way we account for the fact that Moses is made to speak of things that did not exist in his day, and were unknown for hundreds of years after his death.

In the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, we are told that the people, when numbered, must give each one a half shekel after the shekel of the *sanctuary*. At that time no such money existed, and consequently the account could not, by any possibility, have been written until after there was a shekel of the sanctuary, and there was no such thing until long after the death of Moses. If we should read that Cæsar paid his troops in pounds, shillings and pence, we would certainly know that the account was not written by Cæsar, nor in his time, but we would know that it was written after the English had given these names to certain coins.

So, we find, that when the Jews were upon the desert it was commanded that every mother should bring, as a sin offering, a couple of doves to the

priests, and the priests were compelled to eat these doves in the most holy place. At the time this law appears to have been given, there were three million people, and only three priests, Aaron, Eleazer and Ithamar. Among three million people there would be, at least, three hundred births a day. Certainly we are not expected to believe that these three priests devoured six hundred pigeons every twenty-four hours.

Why should a woman ask pardon of God for having been a mother? Why should that be considered a crime in Exodus, which is commanded as a duty in Genesis? Why should a mother be declared unclean? Why should giving birth to a daughter be regarded twice as criminal as giving birth to a son? Can we believe that such laws and ceremonies were made and instituted by a merciful and intelligent God? If there is anything in this poor world suggestive of, and standing for, all that is sweet, loving and pure, it is a mother holding in her thrilled and happy arms her prattling babe. Read the twelfth chapter of Leviticus, and you will see that when a woman became the mother of a boy she was so unclean that she was not allowed to touch a hallowed thing, nor to enter the sanctuary for forty days. If

the babe was a girl, then the mother was unfit for eighty days, to enter the house of God, or to touch the sacred tongs and snuffers. These laws, born of barbarism, are unworthy of our day, and should be regarded simply as the mistakes of savages.

Just as low in the scale of intelligence are the directions given in the fifth chapter of Numbers, for the trial of a wife of whom the husband was jealous. This foolish chapter has been the foundation of all appeals to God for the ascertainment of facts, such as the corsned, trial by battle, by water, and by fire, the last of which is our judicial oath. It is very easy to believe that in those days a guilty woman would be afraid to drink the water of jealousy and take the oath, and that, through fear, she might be made to confess. Admitting that the deception tended not only to prevent crime, but to discover it when committed, still, we cannot admit that an honest god would, for any purpose, resort to dishonest means. In all countries fear is employed as a means of getting at the truth, and in this there is nothing dishonest, provided falsehood is not resorted to for the purpose of producing the fear. Protestants laugh at Catholics because of their belief in the efficacy of holy water, and yet they teach their children that a

little holy water, in which had been thrown some dust from the floor of the sanctuary, would work a miracle in a woman's flesh. For hundreds of years our fathers believed that a perjurer could not swallow a piece of sacramental bread. Such stories belong to the childhood of our race, and are now believed only by mental infants and intellectual babes.

I cannot believe that Moses had in his hands a couple of tables of stone, upon which God had written the Ten Commandments, and that when he saw the golden calf, and the dancing, that he dashed the tables to the earth and broke them in pieces. Neither do I believe that Moses took a golden calf, burnt it, ground it to powder, and made the people drink it with water, as related in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus.

There is another account of the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses, in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus. In this account not one word is said about the people having made a golden calf, nor about the breaking of the tables of stone. In the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, there is an account of the renewal of the broken tables of the law, and the commandments are given, but they are not the same commandments mentioned in the

twentieth chapter. There are two accounts of the same transaction. Both of these stories cannot be true, and yet both must be believed. Any one who will take the trouble to read the nineteenth and twentieth chapters, and the last verse of the thirty-first chapter, the thirty-second, thirty-third, and thirty-fourth chapters of Exodus, will be compelled to admit that both accounts cannot be true.

From the last account it appears that while Moses was upon Mount Sinai receiving the commandments from God, the people brought their jewelry to Aaron and he cast for them a golden calf. This happened before any commandment against idolatry had been given. A god ought, certainly, to publish his laws before inflicting penalties for their violation. To inflict punishment for breaking unknown and unpublished laws is, in the last degree, cruel and unjust. It may be replied that the Jews knew better than to worship idols, before the law was given. If this is so, why should the law have been given? In all civilized countries, laws are made and promulgated, not simply for the purpose of informing the people as to what is right and wrong, but to inform them of the penalties to be visited upon those who violate the laws. When the Ten Command-

ments were given, no penalties were attached. Not one word was written on the tables of stone as to the punishments that would be inflicted for breaking any or all of the inspired laws. The people should not have been punished for violating a commandment before it was given. And yet, in this case, Moses commanded the sons of Levi to take their swords and slay every man his brother, his companion, and his neighbor. The brutal order was obeyed, and three thousand men were butchered. The Levites consecrated themselves unto the Lord by murdering their sons, and their brothers, for having violated a commandment before it had been given.

It has been contended for many years that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of all ideas of justice and of law. Eminent jurists have bowed to popular prejudice, and deformed their works by statements to the effect that the Mosaic laws are the fountains from which sprang all ideas of right and wrong. Nothing can be more stupidly false than such assertions. Thousands of years before Moses was born, the Egyptians had a code of laws. They had laws against blasphemy, murder, adultery, larceny, perjury, laws for the collection of debts, the enforcement of contracts, the ascertainment of

damages, the redemption of property pawned, and upon nearly every subject of human interest. The Egyptian code was far better than the Mosaic.

Laws spring from the instinct of self-preservation. Industry objected to supporting idleness, and laws were made against theft. Laws were made against murder, because a very large majority of the people have always objected to being murdered. All fundamental laws were born simply of the instinct of self-defence. Long before the Jewish savages assembled at the foot of Sinai, laws had been made and enforced, not only in Egypt and India, but by every tribe that ever existed.

It is impossible for human beings to exist together, without certain rules of conduct, certain ideas of the proper and improper, of the right and wrong, growing out of the relation. Certain rules must be made, and must be enforced. This implies law, trial and punishment. Whoever produces anything by weary labor, does not need a revelation from heaven to teach him that he has a right to the thing produced. Not one of the learned gentlemen who pretend that the Mosaic laws are filled with justice and intelligence, would live, for a moment, in any country where such laws were in force.

Nothing can be more wonderful than the medical ideas of Jehovah. He had the strangest notions about the cause and cure of disease. With him everything was miracle and wonder. In the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus, we find the law for cleansing a leper :—" Then shall the priest take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an *earthen* vessel, over *running* water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."

We are told that God himself gave these directions to Moses. Does anybody believe this ? Why should the bird be killed in an *earthen* vessel ? Would the charm be broken if the vessel was of wood ? Why over *running* water ? What would be thought of a physician now, who would give a prescription like that ?

Is it not strange that God, although he gave hundreds of directions for the purpose of discovering the presence of leprosy, and for cleansing the leper after he was healed, forgot to tell how that disease could be cured? Is it not wonderful that while God told his people what animals were fit for food, he failed to give a list of plants that man might eat? Why did he leave his children to find out the hurtful and the poisonous by experiment, knowing that experiment, in millions of cases, must be death?

When reading the history of the Jewish people, of their flight from slavery to death, of their exchange of tyrants, I must confess that my sympathies are all aroused in their behalf. They were cheated, deceived and abused. Their god was quick-tempered, unreasonable, cruel, revengeful and dishonest. He was always promising but never performed. He wasted time in ceremony and childish detail, and in the exaggeration of what he had done. It is impossible for me to conceive of a character more utterly detestable than that of the Hebrew god. He had solemnly promised the Jews that he would take them from Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey. He had led them to believe that in a little while their troubles would be over, and that they would soon

in the land of Canaan, surrounded by their wives and little ones, forget the stripes and tears of Egypt. After promising the poor wanderers again and again that he would lead them in safety to the promised land of joy and plenty, this God, forgetting every promise, said to the wretches in his power :—" Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness and your children shall wander until your carcasses be wasted." This curse was the conclusion of the whole matter. Into this dust of death and night faded all the promises of God. Into this rottenness of wandering despair fell all the dreams of liberty and home. Millions of corpses were left to rot in the desert, and each one certified to the dishonesty of Jehovah. I cannot believe these things. They are so cruel and heartless, that my blood is chilled and my sense of justice shocked. A book that is equally abhorrent to my head and heart, cannot be accepted as a revelation from God.

When we think of the poor Jews, destroyed, murdered, bitten by serpents, visited by plagues, decimated by famine, butchered by each other, swallowed by the earth, frightened, cursed, starved, deceived, robbed and outraged, how thankful we should be that we are not the chosen people of

God. No wonder that they longed for the slavery of Egypt, and remembered with sorrow the unhappy day when they exchanged masters. Compared with Jehovah, Pharaoh was a benefactor, and the tyranny of Egypt was freedom to those who suffered the liberty of God.

While reading the Pentateuch, I am filled with indignation, pity and horror. Nothing can be sadder than the history of the starved and frightened wretches who wandered over the desolate crags and sands of wilderness and desert, the prey of famine, sword, and plague. Ignorant and superstitious to the last degree, governed by falsehood, plundered by hypocrisy, they were the sport of priests, and the food of fear. God was their greatest enemy, and death their only friend.

It is impossible to conceive of a more thoroughly despicable, hateful, and arrogant being, than the Jewish god. He is without a redeeming feature. In the mythology of the world he has no parallel. He, only, is never touched by agony and tears. He delights only in blood and pain. Human affections are naught to him. He cares neither for love nor music, beauty nor joy. A false friend, an unjust judge, a braggart, hypocrite, and tyrant, sincere in

hatred, jealous, vain, and revengeful, false in promise, honest in curse, suspicious, ignorant, and changeable, infamous and hideous:—such is the God of the Pentateuch.

XXIV.

CONFESS AND AVOID.

THE scientific Christians now admit that the Bible is not inspired in its astronomy, geology, botany, zoology, nor in any science. In other words, they admit that on these subjects, the Bible cannot be depended upon. If all the statements in the Scriptures were true, there would be no necessity for admitting that some of them are not inspired. A Christian will not admit that a passage in the Bible is uninspired, until he is satisfied that it is untrue. Orthodoxy itself has at last been compelled to say, that while a passage may be true and uninspired, it cannot be inspired if false.

If the people of Europe had known as much of astronomy and geology when the Bible was introduced among them, as they do now, there never could have been one believer in the doctrine of inspiration. If the writers of the various parts of the Bible had known as much about the sciences as

is now known by every intelligent man, the book never could have been written. It was produced by ignorance, and has been believed and defended by its author. It has lost power in the proportion that man has gained knowledge. A few years ago, this book was appealed to in the settlement of all scientific questions; but now, even the clergy confess that in such matters, it has ceased to speak with the voice of authority. For the establishment of facts, the word of man is now considered far better than the word of God. In the world of science, Jehovah was superseded by Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler. All that God told Moses, admitting the entire account to be true, is dust and ashes compared to the discoveries of Descartes, Laplace, and Humboldt. In matters of fact, the Bible has ceased to be regarded as a standard. Science has succeeded in breaking the chains of theology. A few years ago, Science endeavored to show that it was not inconsistent with the Bible. The tables have been turned, and now, Religion is endeavoring to prove that the Bible is not inconsistent with Science. The standard has been changed.

For many ages, the Christians contended that the Bible, viewed simply as a literary performance, was

beyond all other books, and that man without the assistance of God could not produce its equal. This claim was made when but few books existed, and the Bible, being the only book generally known, had no rival. But this claim, like the other, has been abandoned by many, and soon will be, by all. Compared with Shakespeare's "book and volume of the brain," the "sacred" Bible shrinks and seems as feebly impotent and vain, as would a pipe of Pan, when some great organ, voiced with every tone, from the hoarse thunder of the sea to the winged warble of a mated bird, floods and fills cathedral aisles with all the wealth of sound.

It is now maintained—and this appears to be the last fortification behind which the doctrine of inspiration skulks and crouches—that the Bible, although false and mistaken in its astronomy, geology, geography, history and philosophy, is inspired in its morality. It is now claimed that had it not been for this book, the world would have been inhabited only by savages, and that had it not been for the Holy Scriptures, man never would have even dreamed of the unity of God. A belief in one God is claimed to be a dogma of almost infinite importance, that without this belief civilization is impossible, and that this

fact is the sun around which all the virtues revolve. For my part, I think it infinitely more important to believe in man. Theology is a superstition —Humanity a religion.

XXV.

"INSPIRED" SLAVERY.

PERHAPS the bible was inspired upon the subject of human slavery. Is there, in the civilized world, to-day, a clergyman who believes in the divinity of slavery? Does the bible teach man to enslave his brother? If it does, is it not blasphemous to say that it is inspired of God? If you find the institution of slavery upheld in a book said to have been written by God, what would you expect to find in a book inspired by the devil? Would you expect to find that book in favor of liberty? Modern christians, ashamed of the God of the Old Testament, endeavor now to show that slavery was neither commanded nor opposed by Jehovah. Nothing can be plainer than the following passages from the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus. "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they

shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bond-men forever. Both thy bond-men, and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men, and bond-maids."

Can we believe in this, the Nineteenth Century, that these infamous passages were inspired by God? that God approved not only of human slavery, but instructed his chosen people to buy the women, children and babes of the heathen round about them? If it was right for the Hebrews to buy, it was also right for the heathen to sell. This God, by commanding the Hebrews to buy, approved of the selling of sons and daughters. The Canaanite who, tempted by gold, lured by avarice, sold from the arms of his wife the dimpled babe, simply made it possible for the Hebrews to obey the orders of their God. If God is the author of the bible, the reading of these passages ought to cover his cheeks with shame. I ask the christian world to-day, was it right for the heathen to sell their children? Was it right for God not only to uphold, but to command the infamous traffic in human flesh? Could the most

revengeful fiend, the most malicious vagrant in the gloom of hell, sink to a lower moral depth than this?

According to this God, his chosen people were not only commanded to buy of the heathen round about them, but were also permitted to buy each other for a term of years. The law governing the purchase of Jews is laid down in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus. "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl: and he shall serve him forever."

Do you believe that God was the author of this infamous law? Do you believe that the loving father of us all, turned the dimpled arms of babes

into manacles of iron? Do you believe that he baited the dungeon of servitude with wife and child? Is it possible to love a God who would make such laws? Is it possible not to hate and despise him?

The heathen are not spoken of as human beings. Their rights are never mentioned. They were the rightful food of the sword, and their bodies were made for stripes and chains.

In the same chapter of the same inspired book, we are told that, "if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money."

Must we believe that God called some of his children the money of others? Can we believe that God made lashes upon the naked back, a legal tender for labor performed? Must we regard the auction block as an altar? Were blood hounds apostles? Was the slave-pen a temple? Were the stealers and whippers of babes and women the justified children of God?

It is now contended that while the Old Testament is touched with the barbarism of its time, that the New Testament is morally perfect, and that on

its pages can be found no blot or stain. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is more decidedly in favor of human slavery than the old.

For my part, I never will, I never can, worship a God who upholds the institution of slavery. Such a God I hate and defy. I neither want his heaven, nor fear his hell.

XXVI.

"INSPIRED" MARRIAGE.

Is there an orthodox clergyman in the world, who will now declare that he believes the institution of polygamy to be right? Is there one who will publicly declare that, in his judgment, that institution ever was right? Was there ever a time in the history of the world when it was right to treat woman simply as property? Do not attempt to answer these questions by saying, that the bible is an exceedingly good book, that we are indebted for our civilization to the sacred volume, and that without it, man would lapse into savagery, and mental night. This is no answer. Was there a time when the institution of polygamy was the highest expression of human virtue? Is there a christian woman, civilized, intelligent, and free, who believes in the institution of polygamy? Are we better, purer, and more intelligent than God was four thousand years ago? Why should we imprison Mormons, and wor-

ship God? Polygamy is just as pure in Utah, as it could have been in the promised land. Love and Virtue are the same the whole world round, and Justice is the same in every star. All the languages of the world are not sufficient to express the filth of polygamy. It makes of man a beast, of woman, a trembling slave. It destroys the fireside, makes virtue an outcast, takes from human speech its sweetest words, and leaves the heart a den, where crawl and hiss the slimy serpents of most loathsome lust. Civilization rests upon the family. The good family is the unit of good government. The virtues grow about the holy hearth of home—they cluster, bloom, and shed their perfume round the fireside where the one man loves the one woman. Lover—husband—wife—mother—father—child—home!—without these sacred words, the world is but a lair, and men and women merely beasts.

Why should the innocent maiden and the loving mother worship the heartless Jewish God? Why should they, with pure and stainless lips, read the vile record of inspired lust?

The marriage of the one man to the one woman is the citadel and fortress of civilization. Without this, woman becomes the prey and slave of lust

and power, and man goes back to savagery and crime. From the bottom of my heart I hate, abhor and execrate all theories of life, of which the pure and sacred home is not the corner-stone. Take from the world the family, the fireside, the children born of wedded love, and there is nothing left. The home where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire—the fairest flower in all the world.

XXVII.

"INSPIRED" WAR.

If the bible be true, God commanded his chosen people to destroy men simply for the crime of defending their native land. They were not allowed to spare trembling and white-haired age, nor dimpled babes clasped in the mothers' arms. They were ordered to kill women, and to pierce, with the sword of war, the unborn child. "Our heavenly Father" commanded the Hebrews to kill the men and women, the fathers, sons and brothers, but to preserve the girls alive. Why were not the maidens also killed? Why were they spared? Read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, and you will find that the maidens were given to the soldiers and the priests. Is there, in all the history of war, a more infamous thing than this? Is it possible that God permitted the violets of modesty, that grow and shed their perfume in the maiden's heart, to be trampled be-

neath the brutal feet of lust? If this was the order of God, what, under the same circumstances, would have been the command of a devil? When, in this age of the world, a woman, a wife, a mother, reads this record, she should, with scorn and loathing, throw the book away. A general, who now should make such an order, giving over to massacre and rapine a conquered people, would be held in execration by the whole civilized world. Yet, if the bible be true, the supreme and infinite God was once a savage.

A little while ago, out upon the western plains, in a little path leading to a cabin, were found the bodies of two children and their mother. Her breast was filled with wounds received in the defence of her darlings. They had been murdered by the savages. Suppose when looking at their lifeless forms, some one had said, "This was done by the command of God!" In Canaan there were countless scenes like this. There was no pity in inspired war. God raised the black flag, and commanded his soldiers to kill even the smiling infant in its mother's arms. Who is the blasphemer; the man who denies the existence of God, or he who covers the robes of the Infinite with innocent blood?

We are told in the Pentateuch, that God, the father of us all, gave thousands of maidens, after having killed their fathers, their mothers, and their brothers, to satisfy the brutal lusts of savage men. If there be a God, I pray him to write in his book, opposite my name, that I denied this lie for him.

XXVIII.

"INSPIRED" RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

According to the Bible, God selected the Jewish people through whom to make known the great fact, that he was the only true and living God. For this purpose, he appeared on several occasions to Moses—came down to Sinai's top clothed in cloud and fire, and wrought a thousand miracles for the preservation and education of the Jewish people. In their presence he opened the waters of the sea. For them he caused bread to rain from heaven. To quench their thirst, water leaped from the dry and barren rock. Their enemies were miraculously destroyed; and for forty years, at least, this God took upon himself the government of the Jews. But, after all this, many of the people had less confidence in him than in gods of wood and stone. In moments of trouble, in periods of disaster, in the darkness of doubt, in the hunger and thirst of famine, instead of asking this God for aid, they turned and

sought the help of senseless things. This God, with all his power and wisdom, could not even convince a few wandering and wretched savages that he was more potent than the idols of Egypt. This God was not willing that the Jews should think and investigate for themselves. For heresy, the penalty was death. Where this God reigned, intellectual liberty was unknown. He appealed only to brute force; he collected taxes by threatening plagues; he demanded worship on pain of sword and fire; acting as spy, inquisitor, judge and executioner.

In the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, we have the ideas of God as to mental freedom. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; *namely* of the gods of the people which are around about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth, Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him

to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die."

This is the religious liberty of God; the toleration of Jehovah. If I had lived in Palestine at that time, and my wife, the mother of my children, had said to me, "I am tired of Jehovah, he is always asking for blood; he is never weary of killing; he is always telling of his might and strength; always telling what he has done for the Jews, always asking for sacrifices; for doves and lambs—blood, nothing but blood.—Let us worship the sun. Jehovah is too revengeful, too malignant, too exacting. Let us worship the sun. The sun has clothed the world in beauty; it has covered the earth with flowers; by its divine light I first saw your face, and my beautiful babe."—If I had obeyed the command of God, I would have killed her. My hand would have been first upon her, and after that the hands of all the people, and she would have been stoned with stones until she died. For my part, I would never kill my wife, even if commanded so to do by the real God of this universe. Think of taking up some ragged rock and hurling it against the white bosom filled with love for you; and when you saw oozing from

the bruised lips of the death wound, the red current of her sweet life—think of looking up to heaven and receiving the congratulations of the infinite fiend whose commandment you had obeyed!

Can we believe that any such command was ever given by a merciful and intelligent God? Suppose, however, that God did give this law to the Jews, and did tell them that whenever a man preached a heresy, or proposed to worship any other God that they should kill him; and suppose that afterward this same God took upon himself flesh, and came to this very chosen people and taught a different religion, and that thereupon the Jews crucified him; I ask you, did he not reap exactly what he had sown? What right would this God have to complain of a crucifixion suffered in accordance with his own command?

Nothing can be more infamous than intellectual tyranny. To put chains upon the body is as nothing compared with putting shackles on the brain. No god is entitled to the worship or the respect of man who does not give, even to the meanest of his children, every right that he claims for himself.

If the Pentateuch be true, religious persecution is a duty. The dungeons of the Inquisition were

temples, and the clank of every chain upon the limbs of heresy was music in the ear of God. If the Pentateuch was inspired, every heretic should be destroyed; and every man who advocates a fact inconsistent with the sacred book, should be consumed by sword and flame.

In the Old Testament no one is told to reason with a heretic, and not one word is said about relying upon argument, upon education, nor upon intellectual development—nothing except simple brute force. Is there to-day a christian who will say that four thousand years ago, it was the duty of a husband to kill his wife if she differed with him upon the subject of religion? Is there one who will now say that, under such circumstances, the wife ought to have been killed? Why should God be so jealous of the wooden idols of the heathen? Could he not compete with Baal? Was he envious of the success of the Egyptian magicians? Was it not possible for him to make such a convincing display of his power as to silence forever the voice of unbelief? Did this God have to resort to force to make converts? Was he so ignorant of the structure of the human mind as to believe all honest doubt a crime? If he wished to do away with the idolatry of the Canaan-

ites, why did he not appear to them? Why did he not give them the tables of the law? Why did he only make known his will to a few wandering savages in the desert of Sinai? Will some theologian have the kindness to answer these questions? Will some minister, who now believes in religious liberty, and eloquently denounces the intolerance of Catholicism, explain these things; will he tell us why he worships an intolerant God? Is a god who will burn a soul forever in another world, better than a Christian who burns the body for a few hours in this? Is there no intellectual liberty in heaven? Do the angels all discuss questions on the same side? Are all the investigators in perdition? Will the penitent thief, winged and crowned, laugh at the honest folks in hell? Will the agony of the damned increase or decrease the happiness of God? Will there be, in the universe, an eternal *auto da fe?*

XXIX

CONCLUSION

If the Pentateuch is not inspired in its astronomy, geology, geography, history or philosophy, if it is not inspired concerning slavery, polygamy, war, law, religious or political liberty, or the rights of men, women and children, what is it inspired in, or about? The unity of God?—that was believed long before Moses was born. Special providence?—that has been the doctrine of ignorance in all ages. The rights of property?—theft was always a crime. The sacrifice of animals?—that was a custom thousands of years before a Jew existed. The sacredness of life?—there have always been laws against murder. The wickedness of perjury?—truthfulness has always been a virtue. The beauty of chastity?—the Pentateuch does not teach it. Thou shalt worship no other God?—that has been the burden of all religions.

Is it possible that the Pentateuch could not have been written by uninspired men? that the assistance of God was necessary to produce these books? Is it possible that Galileo ascertained the mechanical principles of "Virtual Velocity," the laws of falling bodies and of all motion; that Copernicus ascertained the true position of the earth and accounted for all celestial phenomena; that Kepler discovered his three laws—discoveries of such importance that the 8th of May, 1618, may be called the birthday of modern science; that Newton gave to the world the Method of Fluxions, the Theory of Universal Gravitation, and the Decomposition of Light; that Euclid, Cavalieri, Descartes, and Leibnitz, almost completed the science of mathematics; that all the discoveries in optics, hydrostatics, pneumatics and chemistry, the experiments, discoveries, and inventions of Galvani, Volta, Franklin and Morse, of Trevethick, Watt and Fulton and of all the pioneers of progress — that all this as accomplished by uninspired men, while the writer of the Pentateuch was directed and inspired by an infinite God? Is it possible that the codes of China, India, Egypt, Greece and Rome were made by man, and that the laws recorded in the Pentateuch were alone given by

God? Is it possible that Æschylus and Shakespeare, Burns, and Beranger, Goethe and Schiller, and all the poets of the world, and all their wondrous tragedies and songs, are but the work of men, while no intelligence except the infinite God could be the author of the Pentateuch? Is it possible that of all the books that crowd the libraries of the world, the books of science, fiction, history and song, that all save only one, have been produced by man? Is it possible that of all these, the Bible only is the work of God?

If the Pentateuch is inspired, the civilization of our day is a mistake and crime. There should be no political liberty. Heresy should be trodden out beneath the bigot's brutal feet. Husbands should divorce their wives at will, and make the mothers of their children houseless and weeping wanderers. Polygamy ought to be practiced; women should become slaves; we should buy the sons and daughters of the heathen and make them bondmen and bondwomen forever. We should sell our own flesh and blood, and have the right to kill our slaves. Men and women should be stoned to death for laboring on the seventh day. "Mediums," such as have familiar spirits, should be burned with fire. Every

vestige of mental liberty should be destroyed, and reason's holy torch extinguished in the martyr's blood.

Is it not far better and wiser to say that the Pentateuch while containing some good laws, some truths, some wise and useful things is, after all, deformed and blackened by the savagery of its time? Is it not far better and wiser to take the good and throw the bad away?

Let us admit what we know to be true; that Moses was mistaken about a thousand things; that the story of creation is not true; that the Garden of Eden is a myth; that the serpent and the tree of knowledge, and the fall of man are but fragments of old mythologies lost and dead; that woman was not made out of a rib; that serpents never had the power of speech; that the sons of God did not marry the daughters of men; that the story of the flood and ark is not exactly true; that the tower of Babel is a mistake; that the confusion of tongues is a childish thing; that the origin of the rainbow is a foolish fancy; that Methuselah did not live nine hundred and sixty-nine years; that Enoch did not leave this world, taking with him his flesh and bones; that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is somewhat

improbable; that burning brimstone never fell like rain; that Lot's wife was not changed into chloride of sodium; that Jacob did not, in fact, put his hip out of joint wrestling with God; that the history of Tamar might just as well have been left out; that a belief in Pharaoh's dreams is not essential to salvation; that it makes but little difference whether the rod of Aaron was changed to a serpent or not; that of all the wonders said to have been performed in Egypt, the greatest is, that anybody ever believed the absurd account; that God did not torment the innocent cattle on account of the sins of their owners; that he did not kill the first born of the poor maid behind the mill because of Pharaoh's crimes; that flies and frogs were not ministers of God's wrath; that lice and locusts were not the executors of his will; that seventy people did not, in two hundred and fifteen years, increase to three million; that three priests could not eat six hundred pigeons in a day; that gazing at a brass serpent could not extract poison from the blood; that God did not go in partnership with hornets; that he did not murder people simply because they asked for something to eat; that he did not declare the making of hair oil and ointment an offence to be punished with death;

that he did not miraculously preserve cloth and leather; that he was not afraid of wild beasts; that he did not punish heresy with sword and fire; that he was not jealous, revengeful, and unjust; that he knew all about the sun, moon, and stars; that he did not threaten to kill people for eating the fat of an ox; that he never told Aaron to draw cuts to see which of two goats should be killed; that he never objected to clothes made of woolen mixed with linen; that if he objected to dwarfs, people with flat noses and too many fingers, he ought not to have created such folks; that he did not demand human sacrifices as set forth in the last chapter of Leviticus; that he did not object to the raising of horses; that he never commanded widows to spit in the faces of their brothers-in-law; that several contradictory accounts of the same transaction cannot all be true; that God did not talk to Abraham as one man talks to another; that angels were not in the habit of walking about the earth eating veal dressed with milk and butter, and making bargains about the destruction of cities; that God never turned himself into a flame of fire, and lived in a bush; that he never met Moses in a hotel and tried to kill him; that it was absurd to perform miracles to induce a king to act in a certain

way and then harden his heart so that he would refuse; that God was not kept from killing the Jews by the fear that the Egyptians would laugh at him; that he did not secretly bury a man and then allow the corpse to write an account of the funeral; that he never believed the firmament to be solid; that he knew slavery was and always would be a frightful crime; that polygamy is but stench and filth; that the brave soldier will always spare an unarmed foe; that only cruel cowards slay the conquered and the helpless; that no language can describe the murderer of a smiling babe; that God did not want the blood of doves and lambs; that he did not love the smell of burning flesh; that he did not want his altars daubed with blood; that he did not pretend that the sins of a people could be transferred to a goat; that he did not believe in witches, wizards, spooks, and devils; that he did not test the virtue of woman with dirty water; that he did not suppose that rabbits chewed the cud; that he never thought there were any four-footed birds; that he did not boast for several hundred years that he had vanquished an Egyptian king; that a dry stick did not bud, blossom, and bear almonds in one night; that manna did not shrink and swell, so that each man could gather only

just one omer; that it was never wrong to "countenance the poor man in his cause;" that God never told a people not to live in peace with their neighbors; that he did not spend forty days with Moses on Mount Sinai giving him patterns for making clothes, tongs, basins, and snuffers; that maternity is not a sin; that physical deformity is not a crime; that an atonement cannot be made for the soul by shedding innocent blood; that killing a dove over running water will not make its blood a medicine; that a god who demands love knows nothing of the human heart; that one who frightens savages with loud noises is unworthy the love of civilized men; that one who destroys children on account of the sins of their fathers is a monster; that an infinite god never threatened to give people the itch; that he never sent wild beasts to devour babes; that he never ordered the violation of maidens; that he never regarded patriotism as a crime; that he never ordered the destruction of unborn children; that he never opened the earth and swallowed wives and babes because husbands and fathers had displeased him; that he never demanded that men should kill their sons and brothers, for the purpose of sanctifying themselves; that we cannot please God by believing

the improbable; that credulity is not a virtue; that investigation is not a crime; that every mind should be free; that all religious persecution is infamous in God, as well as man; that without liberty, virtue is impossible; that without freedom, even love cannot exist; that every man should be allowed to think and to express his thoughts; that woman is the equal of man; that children should be governed by love and reason; that the family relation is sacred; that war is a hideous crime; that all intolerance is born of ignorance and hate; that the freedom of to-day is the hope of to-morrow; that the enlightened present ought not to fall upon its knees and blindly worship the barbaric past; and that every free, brave and enlightened man should publicly declare that all the ignorant, infamous, heartless, hideous things recorded in the "inspired" Pentateuch are not the words of God, but simply "Some Mistakes of Moses."

SOME REASONS WHY.

SOME REASONS WHY.

I.

RELIGION makes enemies instead of friends. That one word, "religion," covers all the horizon of memory with visions of war, of outrage, of persecution, of tyranny, and death. That one word brings to the mind every instrument with which man has tortured man. In that one word are all the fagots and flames and dungeons of the past, and in that word is the infinite and eternal hell of the future.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow-men. Although they have been preaching universal love, the Christian nations are the warlike nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. The musket, the revolver, the rifled canon, the bombshell, the torpedo, the explosive bullet, have been invented by Christian brains.

Above all other arts, the Christian world has placed the art of war.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now, something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast.

Whoever imagines himself a favorite with God, holds other people in contempt.

Whenever a man believes that he has the exact truth from God, there is in that man no spirit of compromise. He has not the modesty born of the imperfections of human nature; he has the arrogance of theological certainty and the tyranny born of ignorant assurance. Believing himself to be the slave of God, he imitates his master, and of all tyrants, the worst is a slave in power.

When a man really believes that it is necessary to do a certain thing to be happy forever, or that a certain belief is necessary to ensure eternal joy, there is in that man no spirit of concession. He divides the

whole world into saints and sinners, into believers and unbelievers, into God's sheep and Devil's goats, into people who will be glorified and people who will be damned.

A Christian nation can make no compromise with one not Christian; it will either compel that nation to accept its doctrine, or it will wage war. If Christ, in fact, said "I came not to bring peace but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled.

II.

DUTIES TO GOD.

RELIGION is supposed to consist in a discharge of the duties we owe to God. In other words, we are taught that God is exceedingly anxious that we should believe a certain thing. For my part, I do not believe that there is any infinite being to whom we owe anything. The reason I say this is, we can not owe any duty to any being who requires nothing—to any being that we cannot possibly help, to any being whose happiness we cannot increase. If God is infinite, we cannot make him happier than he is. If God is infinite, we can neither give, nor can he receive, anything. Anything that we do or fail to do, cannot, in the slightest degree, affect an infinite God; consequently, no relations can exist between the finite and the Infinite, if by relations is meant mutual duties and obligations.

Some tell us that it is the desire of God that we should worship him. What for? Why does he

desire worship? Others tell us that we should sacrifice something to him. What for? Is he in want? Can we assist him? Is he unhappy? Is he in trouble? Does he need human sympathy? We cannot assist the Infinite, but we can assist our fellow-men. We can feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and enlighten the ignorant, and we can help, in some degree at least, toward covering this world with the mantle of joy.

I do not believe there is any being in this universe who gives rain for praise, who gives sunshine for prayer, or who blesses a man simply because he kneels.

The Infinite cannot receive praise or worship.

The Infinite can neither hear nor answer prayer.

An Infinite personality is an infinite impossibility.

III.

INSPIRATION.

WE are told that we have in our possession the inspired will of God. What is meant by the word "inspired" is not exactly known; but whatever else it may mean, certainly it means that the "inspired" must be the true. If it is true, there is, in fact, no need of its being inspired—the truth will take care of itself.

The church is forced to say that the Bible differs from all other books; it is forced to say that it contains the actual will of God. Let us then see what inspiration really is. A man looks at the sea, and the sea says something to him. It makes an impression upon his mind. It awakens memory, and this impression depends upon the man's experience—upon his intellectual capacity. Another looks upon the same sea. He has a different brain; he has had a different experience. The sea may speak to him

of joy, to the other of grief and tears. The sea cannot tell the same thing to any two human beings, because no two human beings have had the same experience,

A year ago, while the cars were going from Boston to Gloucester, we passed through Manchester. As the cars stopped, a lady sitting opposite, speaking to her husband, looking out of the window and catching, for the first time, a view of the sea, cried out, "Is it not beautiful!" and the husband replied, "I'll bet you could dig clams right here!"

Another, standing upon the shore, listening to what the great Greek tragedian called "the multitudinous laughter of the sea," may say: Every drop has visited all the shores of the earth; every one has been frozen in the vast and icy North; every one has fallen in snow, has been whirled by storms around mountain peaks; every one has been kissed to vapor by the sun; every one has worn the seven-hued garment of light; every one has fallen in pleasant rain, gurgled from springs and laughed in brooks while lovers wooed upon the banks, and every one has rushed with mighty rivers back to the sea's em-

brace. Everything in nature tells a different story to all eyes that see and to all ears that hear.

Once in my life, and once only, I heard Horace Greeley deliver a lecture. I think its title was, "Across the Continent." At last he reached the mammoth trees of California, and I thought "Here is an opportunity for the old man to indulge his fancy. Here are trees that have outlived a thousand human governments. There are limbs above his head older than the pyramids. While man was emerging from barbarism to something like civilization, these trees were growing. Older than history, every one appeared to be a memory, a witness, and a prophecy. The same wind that filled the sails of the Argonauts had swayed these trees." But these trees said nothing of this kind to Mr. Greeley. Upon these subjects not a word was told to him. Instead, he took his pencil, and after figuring awhile, remarked: "One of these trees, sawed into inch-boards, would make more than three hundred thousand feet of lumber."

I was once riding on the cars in Illinois. There had been a violent thunder-storm. The rain had

ceased, the sun was going down. The great clouds had floated toward the west, and there they assumed most wonderful architectural shapes. There were temples and palaces domed and turreted, and they were touched with silver, with amethyst and gold. They looked like the homes of the Titans, or the palaces of the gods. A man was sitting near me. I touched him and said, "Did you ever see anything so beautiful!" He looked out. He saw nothing of the cloud, nothing of the sun, nothing of the color; he saw only the country and replied, "Yes, it is beautiful; I always did like rolling land."

On another occasion I was riding in a stage. There had been a snow, and after the snow a sleet, and all the trees were bent, and all the boughs were arched. Every fence, every log cabin had been transfigured, touched with a glory almost beyond this world. The great fields were a pure and perfect white; the forests, drooping beneath their load of gems, made wonderful caves, from which one almost expected to see troops of fairies come. The whole world looked like a bride, jewelled from head to foot. A German on the back seat, hearing our

talk, and our exclamations of wonder leaned forward, looked out of the stage window and said: "Yes, it looks like a clean table cloth!"

So, when we look upon a flower, a painting, a statue, a star, or a violet, the more we know, the more we have experienced, the more we have thought, the more we remember, the more the statue, the star, the painting, the violet has to tell. Nature says to me all that I am capable of understanding—gives all that I can receive.

As with star, or flower, or sea, so with a book. A man reads Shakespeare. What does he get from him? All that he has the mind to understand. He gets his little cup full. Let another read him who knows nothing of the drama, nothing of the impersonations of passion, and what does he get? Almost nothing. Shakespeare has a different story for each reader. He is a world in which each recognizes his acquaintances—he may know a few, he may know all.

The impression that nature makes upon the mind, the stories told by sea and star and flower, must be the natural food of thought. Leaving out for the

moment the impression gained from ancestors, the hereditary fears and drifts and trends—the natural food of thought must be the impression made upon the brain by coming in contact through the medium of the five senses with what we call the outward world. The brain is natural. Its food is natural. The result, thought, must be natural. The supernatural can be constructed with no material except the natural. Of the supernatural we can have no conception. Thought may be deformed, and the thought of one may be strange to, and denominated as unnatural by, another; but it cannot be supernatural. It may be weak, it may be insane, but it is not supernatural. Above the natural man cannot rise, even with the aid of fancy's wings. There can can be deformed ideas, as there are deformed persons. There can be religions monstrous and misshapen, but they must be naturally produced. Some people have ideas about what they are pleased to call the supernatural; but what they call the supernatural is simply the deformed. The world is to each man according to each man. It takes the world as it really is and that man to make that man's

world, and that man's world cannot exist without that man.

You may ask, and what of all this? I reply, as with everything in nature, so with the Bible. It has a different story for each reader. Is then the Bible a different book to every human being who reads it? It is. Can God then, through the Bible, make the same revelation to two persons? He cannot. Why? Because the man who reads it is the man who inspires. Inspiration is in the man, as well as in the book. God should have inspired readers as well as writers.

You may reply: "God knew that his book would be understood differently by each one, and that he really intended that it should be understood as it is understood by each." If this is so, then my understanding of the Bible is the real revelation to me. If this is so, I have no right to take the understanding of another. I must take the revelation made to me through my understanding, and by that revelation I must stand. Suppose then, that I do read this Bible honestly, fairly, and when I get through I am compelled to say, "The book is not

true." If this is the honest result, then you are compelled to say, either that God has made no revelation to me, or that the revelation that it is not true, is the revelation made to me, and by which I am bound. If the book and my brain are both the work of the same Infinite God, whose fault is it that the book and the brain do not agree? Either God should have written a book to fit my brain, or should have made my brain to fit his book.

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of him who reads. There was a time when its geology, its astronomy, its natural history, were inspired. That time has passed. There was a time when its morality satisfied the men who ruled mankind. That time has passed. There was a time when the tyrant regarded its laws as good; when the master believed in its liberty; when strength gloried in its passages; but these laws never satisfied the oppressed, they were never quoted by the slave.

We have a sacred book, an inspired Bible, and I am told that this book was written by the same being who made every star, and who peopled infinite space with infinite worlds. I am also told that

God created man, and that man is totally depraved. It has always seemed to me that an infinite being has no right to make imperfect things. I may be mistaken; but this is the only planet I have ever been on; I live in what might be called one of the rural districts of this universe, consequently I may be mistaken; I simply give the best and largest thought I have.

IV.

GOD'S EXPERIMENT WITH THE JEWS.

THE Bible tells us that men became so bad that God destroyed them all with the exception of eight persons; that afterwards he chose Abraham and some of his kindred, a wandering tribe, for the purpose of seeing whether or no they could be civilized. He had no time to waste with all the world. The Egyptians at that time, a vast and splendid nation, having a system of laws and free schools, believing in the marriage of the one man to the one woman; believing, too, in the rights of woman —a nation that had courts of justice and understood the philosophy of damages—these people had received no revelation from God,—they were left to grope in Nature's night. He had no time to civilize India, wherein had grown a civilization that fills the world with wonder still—a people with a language

as perfect as ours, a people who had produced philosophers, scientists, poets. He had no time to waste on them; but he took a few, the tribe of Abraham. He established a perfect despotism—with no schools, with no philosophy, with no art, with no music—nothing but the sacrifices of dumb beasts—nothing but the abject worship of a slave. Not a word upon geology, upon astronomy; nothing, even, upon the science of medicine. Thus God spent hours and hours with Moses upon the top of Sinai, giving directions for ascertaining the presence of leprosy and for preventing its spread, but it never occurred to Jehovah to tell Moses how it could be cured. He told them a few things about what they might eat—prohibiting among other things four-footed birds, and one thing upon the subject of cooking. From the thunders and lightnings of Sinai he proclaimed this vast and wonderful fact: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." He took these people, according to our sacred Scriptures, under his immediate care, and for the purpose of controlling them he wrought wonderful miracles in their sight.

Is it not a little curious that no priest of one re-

ligion has ever been able to astonish a priest of another religion by telling a miracle? Our missionaries tell the Hindoos the miracles of the Bible, and the Hindoo priests, without the movement of a muscle, hear them and then recite theirs, and theirs do not astonish our missionaries in the least! Is it not a little curious that the priests of one religion never believe the priests of another? Is it not a little strange that the believers in sacred books regard all except their own as having been made by hypocrites and fools?

I heard the other day a story. A gentleman was telling some wonderful things and the listeners, with one exception, were saying, as he proceeded with his tale, "Is it possible?" "Did you ever hear anything so wonderful?" and when he had concluded, there was a kind of chorus of "Is it possible?" and "Can it be?" One man, however, sat perfectly quiet, utterly unmoved. Another listener said to him "Did you hear that?" and he replied "Yes." "Well," said the other, "You did not manifest much astonishment." "Oh, no," was the answer, "I am a liar myself."

I am told by the sacred Scriptures that, as a matter of fact, God, even with the help of miracles, failed to civilize the Jews, and this shows of how little real benefit, after all, it is, to have a ruler much above the people, or to simply excite the wonder of mankind. Infinite wisdom, if the account be true, could not civilize a single tribe. Laws made by Jehovah himself were not obeyed, and every effort of Jehovah failed. It is claimed that God made known his law and inspired men to write and teach his will, and yet, it was found utterly impossible to reform mankind.

V.

CIVILIZED COUNTRIES.

IN all civilized countries, it is now passionately asserted that slavery is a crime; that a war of conquest is murder; that polygamy enslaves woman, degrades man and destroys home; that nothing is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepid men, of helpless mothers, and of prattling babes; that captured maidens should not be given to their captors; that wives should not be stoned to death for differing with their husbands on the subject of religion. We know that there was a time, in the history of most nations, when all these crimes were regarded as divine institutions. Nations entertaining this view now are regarded as savage, and, with the exception of the South Sea Islanders, Feejees, a few tribes in Central Africa, and some citizens of Delaware, no human beings are found degraded enough to agree upon these subjects with Jehovah.

The only evidence we can have that a nation has ceased to be savage, is that it has abandoned these doctrines of savagery.

To every one except a theologian, it is easy to account for these mistakes and crimes by saying that civilization is a painful growth; that the moral perceptions are cultivated through ages of tyranny, of crime, and of heroism; that it requires centuries for man to put out the eyes of self and hold in lofty and in equal poise the golden scales of Justice. Conscience is born of suffering. Mercy is the child of the imagination. Man advances as he becomes acquainted with his surroundings, with the mutual obligations of life, and learns to take advantage of the forces of nature.

The believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say, that there was a time when slavery was right, when women could sell their babes, when polygamy was the highest form of virtue, when wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy, when religious toleration was a crime, and when death was the just penalty for having expressed an honest thought. He is compelled to insist that

Jehovah is as bad now as he was then; that he is as good now as he was then. Once, all the crimes that I have mentioned were commanded by God; now they are prohibited. Once, God was in favor of them all; now the Devil is their defender. In other words, the Devil entertains the same opinion to-day that God held four thousand years ago. The Devil is as good now as Jehovah was then, and God was as bad then as the Devil is now. Other nations besides the Jews had similar laws and ideas—believed in and practiced the same crimes, and yet, it is not claimed that they received a revelation. They had no knowledge of the true God, and yet they practiced the same crimes, of their own motion, that the Jews did by command of Jehovah. From this it would seem that man can do wrong without a special revelation.

The passages upholding slavery, polygamy, war and religious persecution are certainly not evidences of the inspiration of that book. Suppose nothing had been in the Old Testament upholding these crimes, would the modern Christian suspect that it was not inspired on that account? Suppose nothing

had been in the Old Testament except laws in favor of these crimes, would it still be insisted that it was inspired? If the Devil had inspired a book, will some Christian tell us in what respect, on the subjects of slavery, polygamy, war and liberty, it would have differed from some parts of the Old Testament? Suppose we knew that after inspired men had finished the Bible the Devil had gotten possession of it and had written a few passages, what part would Christians now pick out as being probably his work? Which of the following passages would be selected as having been written by the Devil: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every woman, but all the women children keep alive for yourselves"?

Is there a believer in the Bible who does not now wish that God, amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, had said to Moses that man should not own his fellow-man; that women should not sell their babes; that all men should be allowed to think and investigate for themselves, and that the sword never should be unsheathed to shed innocent blood? Is there a believer who would not be delighted to find

that every one of the infamous passages are interpolations, and that the skirts of God were never reddened by the blood of maiden, wife, or babe? Is there an honest man who does not regret that God commanded a husband to stone his wife for suggesting the worship of some other God? Surely we do not need an inspired book to teach us that slavery is right, that polygamy is virtue, and that intellectual liberty is a crime.

VI.

A COMPARISON OF BOOKS.

LET us compare the gems of Jehovah with Pagan paste. It may be that the best way to illustrate what I have said, is to compare the supposed teachings of Jehovah with those of persons who never wrote an inspired line. In all ages of which any record has been preserved, men have given their ideas of justice, charity, liberty, love and law. If the Bible is the work of God, it should contain the sublimest truths, it should excel the works of man, it should contain the loftiest definitions of justice, the best conceptions of human liberty, the clearest outlines of duty, the tenderest and noblest thoughts. Upon every page should be found the luminous evidence of its divine origin. It should contain grander and more wonderful things than man has written.

It may be said that it is unfair to call attention to bad things in the Bible. To this it may be replied that a divine being ought not to put bad things in his book. If the Bible now upholds what we call crimes, it will not do to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is? It may be said, that the thoughts are inspired. This would include only thoughts expressed without words. If ideas are inspired, they must be expressed by inspired words—that is to say, by an inspired arrangement of words. If a sculptor were inspired of God to make a statue, we would not say that the marble was inspired, but the statue—that is to say, the relation of part to part, the married harmony of form and function. The language, the words, take the place of the marble, and it is the arrangement of the words that Christians claim to be inspired. If there is an uninspired word, or a word in the wrong place, until that word is known a doubt is cast on every word the book contains.

If it was worth God's while to make a revelation at all, it was certainly worth his while to see that it was correctly made—that it was absolutely preserved.

Why should God allow an inspired book to be interpolated? If it was worth while to inspire men to write it, it was worth while to inspire men to preserve it; and why should he allow another person to interpolate in it that which was not inspired? He certainly would not have allowed the man he inspired to write contrary to the inspiration. He should have preserved his revelation. Neither will it do to say that God adapted his revelation to the prejudices of man. It was necessary for him to adapt his revelation to the capacity of man, but certainly God would not confirm a barbarian in his prejudices. He would not fortify a heathen in his crimes.

If a revelation is of any importance, it is to eradicate prejudice. They tell us now that the Jews were so ignorant, so bad, that God was compelled to justify their crimes, in order to have any influence with them. They say that if he had declared slavery and polygamy to be crimes, the Jews would have refused to receive the Ten Commandments. They tell us that God did the best he could; that his real intention was to lead them along slowly, so that in a

few hundred years they would be induced to admit that larceny and murder and polygamy and slavery were not virtues. I suppose if we now wished to break a cannibal of the bad habit of devouring missionaries, we would first induce him to cook them in a certain way, saying: "To eat cooked missionary is one step in advance of eating your missionary raw. After a few years, a little mutton could be cooked with missionary, and year after year the amount of mutton could be increased and the amount of missionary decreased, until in the fullness of time the dish could be entirely mutton, and after that the missionaries would be absolutely safe."

If there is anything of value, it is liberty—liberty of body, liberty of mind. The liberty of body is the reward of labor. Intellectual liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of the mind, and without it, the world is a prison, the universe a dungeon.

If the Bible is really inspired, Jehovah commanded the Jewish people to buy the children of the strangers that sojourned among them, and ordered that the children thus bought should be an inheritance for the children of the Jews, and that they should be

bondmen and bondwomen forever. Yet Epictetus, a man to whom no revelation was ever made, a man whose soul followed only the light of nature, and who had never heard of the Jewish God, was great enough to say: "Will you not remember that your servants are by nature your brothers, the children of God? In saying that you have bought them, you look down on the earth, and into the pit, on the wretched law of men long since dead, but you see not the laws of the gods."

We find that Jehovah, speaking to his chosen people, assured them that their bondmen and their bondmaids must be "of the heathen that were round about them." "Of them," said Jehovah, "shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." And yet Cicero, a pagan, Cicero, who had never been enlightened by reading the Old Testament, had the moral grandeur to declare: "They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens but not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, with which benevolence and justice would perish forever."

If the Bible is inspired, Jehovah, God of all worlds, actually said: "And if a man smite his servant or his

maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be sorely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." And yet Zeno, founder of the Stoics, centuries before Christ was born, insisted that no man could be the owner of another, and that the title was bad, whether the slave had become so by conquest or by purchase.

Jehovah ordered a Jewish general to make war, and gave, among others, this command: "When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." And yet Epictetus, whom we have already quoted, gave this marvelous rule for the guidance of human conduct: "Live with thy inferiors as thou wouldst have thy superiors live with thee."

Is it possible, after all, that a being of infinite goodness and wisdom said: "I will heap mischief upon them; I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison

of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs :" while Seneca, an uninspired Roman, said : "The wise man will not pardon any crime that ought to be punished, but he will accomplish, in a nobler way, all that is sought in pardoning. He will spare some and watch over some, because of their youth, and others on account of their ignorance. His clemency will not fall short of justice, but will fulfill it perfectly."

Can we believe that God ever said to any one : "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow ; let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg ; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places ; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor ; let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children." If he ever said these words, surely he had never heard this line, this strain of music from the Hindu : "Sweet is the lute to those who have not heard the prattle of their own children."

Jehovah, "from the clouds and darkness of Sinai," said to the Jews: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. . . . Though shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Contrast this with the words put by the Hindu in the mouth of Brahma: "I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he who partakest of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshipers."

Compare these passages; the first a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns.

Is it possible that the real God ever said:

"And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of my people."

Compare that passage with one from a Pagan.

"It is better to keep silence for the remainder of your life than to speak falsely."

Can we believe that a being of infinite mercy gave this command :

" Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor ; consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day."

Surely, that God was not animated by so great and magnanimous a spirit as was Antoninus, a Roman emperor, who declared that, " he had rather keep a single Roman citizen alive than slay a thousand enemies."

Compare the laws given to the children of Israel, as it is claimed by the Creator of us all, with the following from Marcus Aurelius :

" I have formed the ideal of a state, in which there is the same law for all, and equal rights, and equal liberty of speech established ; an empire where nothing is honored so much as the freedom of the citizen."

In the Avesta I find this : " I belong to five : to

those who think good, to those who speak good, to those who do good, to those who hear, and to those who are pure."

"Which is the one prayer which in greatness, goodness, and beauty is worth all that is between heaven and earth and between this earth and the stars? And he replied: To renounce all evil thoughts and words and works."

VII.

IT is claimed by the Christian world that one of the great reasons for giving an inspired book to the Jews was, that through them the world might learn that there is but one God. This piece of information has been supposed to be of infinite value. As a matter of fact, long before Moses was born, the Egyptians believed and taught that there was but one God—that is to say, that above all intelligences there was the one Supreme. They were guilty, too, of the same inconsistencies of modern Christians. They taught the doctrine of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Mother, and God the Son. God was frequently represented as father, mother and babe. They also taught that the soul had a divine origin; that after death it was to be judged according to the deeds done in the body; that those who had done well passed into perpetual joy, and those who had done evil into endless pain. In this they agreed with

the most approved divine of the nineteenth century. Women were the equals of men, and Egypt was often governed by queens. In this, her government was vastly better than the one established by God. The laws were administered by courts much like ours. In Egypt there was a system of schools that gave the son of poverty a chance of advancement, and the highest offices were open to the successful scholar. The Egyptian married one wife. The wife was called "the lady of the house." The women were not secluded. The people were not divided into castes. There was nothing to prevent the rise of able and intelligent Egyptians. But like the Jehovah of the Jews, they made slaves of the captives of war.

The ancient Persians believed in one God; and women helped to found the Parsee religion. Nothing can exceed some of the maxims of Zoroaster. The Hindoos taught that above all, and over all, was one eternal Supreme. They had a code of laws. They understood the philosophy of evidence and of damages. They knew better than to teach the doctrine of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

They knew that when one man maimed another, it was not to the interest of society to have that man maimed, thus burdening the people with two cripples, but that it was better to make the man who maimed the other work to support him. In India, upon the death of a father, the daughters received twice as much from the estate as the sons.

The Romans built temples to Truth, Faith, Valor, Concord, Modesty, and Charity, in which they offered sacrifices to the highest conceptions of human excellence. Women had rights; they presided in the temple; they officiated in holy offices; they guarded the sacred fires upon which the safety of Rome depended; and when Christ came, the grandest figure in the known world was the Roman mother.

It will not do to say that some rude statue was made by an inspired sculptor, and that the Apollo of Belvidere, Venus de Milo, and the Gladiator were made by unaided men; that the daubs of the early ages were painted by divine assistance, while the Raphaels, the Angelos, and the Rembrandts did what they did without the help of heaven. It will not do to say, that the first hut was built by God,

and the last palace by degraded man; that the hoarse songs of the savage tribes were made by the Deity, but that Hamlet and Lear were written by man; that the pipes of Pan were invented in heaven, and all other musical instruments on the earth.

If the Jehovah of the Jews had taken upon himself flesh, and dwelt as a man among the people he endeavored to govern, had he followed his own teachings, he would have been a slaveholder, a buyer of babes, and a beater of women. He would have waged wars of extermination. He would have killed grey-haired and trembling age, and would have sheathed his sword, in prattling, dimpled babes. He would have been a polygamist, and would have butchered his wife for differing with him on the subject of religion.

VIII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ONE great objection to the Old Testament is the cruelty said to have been commanded by God. All these cruelties ceased with death. The vengeance of Jehovah stopped at the tomb. He never threatened to punish the dead; and there is not one word, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse of Malachi, containing the slightest intimation that God will take his revenge in another world. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the doctrine of eternal pain. The teacher of universal benevolence rent the veil between time and eternity, and fixed the horrified gaze of man upon the lurid gulf of hell. Within the breast of non-resistance coiled the worm that never dies. Compared with this, the doctrine of slavery, the wars of extermination, the curses, the punishments of the Old Testament were all merciful and just.

There is no time to speak of the conflicting statements in the various books composing the New Testament—no time to give the history of the manuscripts, the errors in translation, the interpolations made by the fathers and by their successors, the priests, and only time to speak of a few objections, including some absurdities and some contradictions.

Where several witnesses testify to the same transaction, no matter how honest they may be, they will disagree upon minor matters, and such testimony is generally considered as evidence that the witnesses have not conspired among themselves. The differences in statement are accounted for from the facts that all do not see alike, and that all have not equally good memories; but when we claim that the witnesses are inspired, we must admit that he who inspired them did know exactly what occurred, and consequently there should be no disagreement, even in the minutest detail. The accounts should not only be substantially, but they should be actually, the same. The differences and contradictions can be accounted for by the weaknesses of human nature,

but these weaknesses cannot be predicated of divine wisdom.

And here let me ask: Why should there have been more than one correct account of what really happened? Why were four gospels necessary? It seems to me that one inspired gospel, containing all that happened, was enough. Copies of the one correct one could have been furnished to any extent. According to Doctor Davidson, Irenæus argues that the gospels were four in number, because there are four universal winds, four corners of the globe. Others have said, because there are four seasons; and these gentlemen might have added, because a donkey has four legs. For my part, I cannot even conceive of a reason for more than one gospel.

According to one of these gospels, and according to the prevalent Christian belief, the Christian religion rests upon the doctrine of the atonement. If this doctrine is without foundation, the fabric falls; and it is without foundation, for it is repugnant to justice and mercy. The church tells us that the first man committed a crime for which all others are responsible. This absurdity was the father and

mother of another—that a man can be rewarded for the good action of another. We are told that God made a law, with the penalty of eternal death. All men, they tell us, have broken this law. The law had to be vindicated. This could be done by damning everybody, but through what is known as the atonement the salvation of a few was made possible. They insist that the law demands the extreme penalty, that justice calls for its victim, that mercy ceases to plead, and that God by allowing the innocent to suffer in the place of the guilty settled satisfactory with the law. To carry out this scheme God was born as a babe, grew in stature, increased in knowledge, and at the age of thirty-three years having lived a life filled with kindness, having practiced every virtue, he was sacrificed as an atonement for man. It is claimed that he took our place, bore our sins, our guilt, and in this way satisfied the justice of God.

Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sin except through the shedding of blood. When a man sinned he must bring to the priest a lamb, a bullock, a goat, or a pair of turtle-doves.

The priest would lay his hand upon the animal and the sin of the man would be transferred to the beast. Then the animal would be killed in place of the sinner, and the blood thus shed would be sprinkled upon the altar. In this way Jehovah was satisfied. The greater the crime, the greater the sacrifice. There was a ratio between the value of the animal and the enormity of the sin.

The most minute directions were given as to the killing of these animals. Every priest became a butcher, every synagogue a slaughter-house. Nothing could be more utterly shocking to a refined soul, nothing better calculated to harden the heart, than the continual shedding of innocent blood. This terrible system culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is not necessary to shed any more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited.

The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery; and yet the Mosaic dispensation was better adapted to prevent the commission of sin than the Christian system. Under that dispensation, if

you committed a sin, you had to bring a sacrifice—dove, sheep, or bullock, now, when a sin is committed, the Christian says, "Charge it," "Put it on the slate, If I don't pay it the Savior will." In this way, rascality is sold on a credit, and the credit system of religion breeds extravagance in sin. The Mosaic dispensation was based upon far better business principles. The debt had to be paid, and by the man who owed it. We are told that the sinner is in debt to God, and that the obligation is discharged by the Savior. The best that can be said of such a transaction is that the debt is transferred, not paid. As a matter of fact, the sinner is in debt to the person he has injured. If you injure a man, it is not enough to get the forgiveness of God—you must get the man's forgiveness, you must get your own. If a man puts his hand in the fire and God forgives him, his hand will smart just as badly. You must reap what you sow. No God can give you wheat when you sow tares, and no Devil can give you tares when you sow wheat. We must remember that in nature there are neither rewards nor punishments—there are consequences. The life and death of

Christ do not constitute an atonement. They are worth the example, the moral force, the heroism of benevolence, and in so far as the life of Christ produces emulation in the direction of goodness, it has been of value to mankind.

To make innocence suffer is the greatest sin, and it may be the only sin. How, then, is it possible to make the consequences of sin an atonement for sin, when the consequences of sin are to be borne by one who has not sinned, and the one who has sinned is to reap the reward of virtue? No honorable man should be willing that another should suffer for him. No good law can accept the sufferings of innocence as an atonement for the guilty; and besides, if there was no atonement until the crucifixion of Christ, what became of the countless millions who died before that time? We must remember that the Jews did not kill animals for the Gentiles. Jehovah hated foreigners. There was no way provided for the forgiveness of a heathen. What has become of the millions who have died since, without having heard of the atonement? What becomes of those who hear and do not believe? Can there be a law that de-

mands that the guilty be rewarded. And yet, to reward the guilty is far nearer justice than to punish the innocent. If the doctrine of the atonement is true, there would have been no heaven had no atonement been made.

If Judas had understood the Christian system, if he knew that Christ must be betrayed, and that God was depending on him to betray him, and that without the betrayal no human soul could be saved, what should Judas have done?

Jehovah took special charge of the Jewish people. He did this for the purpose of civilizing them. If he had succeeded in civilizing them, he would have made the damnation of the entire human race a certainty; because if the Jews had been a civilized people when Christ appeared—a people who had not been hardened by the laws of Jehovah—they would not have crucified Christ, and as a consequence, the world would have been lost. If the Jews had believed in religious freedom, in the rights of thought and speech, if the Christian religion is true, not a human soul ever could have been saved. If, when Christ was on his way to Calvary, some brave soul

had rescued him from the pious mob, he would not only have been damned for his pains, but would have rendered impossible the salvation of any human being.

The Christian world has been trying for nearly two thousand years to explain the atonement, and every effort has ended in an admission that it cannot be understood, and a declaration that it must be believed. Has the promise and hope of forgiveness ever prevented the commission of a sin? Can men be made better by being taught that sin gives happiness here; that to live a virtuous life is to bear a cross; that men can repent between the last sin and the last breath; and that repentance washes every stain of the soul away? Is it good to teach that the serpent of regret will not hiss in the ear of memory; that the saved will not even pity the victims of their crimes; and that sins forgiven cease to affect the unhappy wretches sinned against?

Another objection is, that a certain belief is necessary to save the soul. This doctrine, I admit, is taught in the gospel according to John, and in many of the epistles; I deny that it is taught in

Matthew, Mark, or Luke. It is, however, asserted by the church that to believe is the only safe way. To this, I reply: Belief is not a voluntary thing. A man believes or disbelieves in spite of himself. They tell us that to believe is the safe way; but I say, the safe way is to be honest. Nothing can be safer than that. No man in the hour of death ever regretted having been honest. No man when the shadows of the last day were gathering about the pillow of death, ever regretted that he had given to his fellow-man his honest thought. No man, in the presence of eternity, ever wished that he had been a hypocrite. No man ever then regretted that he did not throw away his reason. It certainly cannot be necessary to throw away your reason to save your soul, because after that, your soul is not worth saving. The soul has a right to defend itself. My brain is my castle; and when I waive the right to defend it, I become an intellectual serf and slave.

I do not admit that a man by doing me an injury can place me under obligations to do him a service. To render benefits for injuries is to ignore all distinctions between actions. He who treats friends

and enemies alike has neither love nor justice. The idea of non-resistance never occurred to a man with power to defend himself. The mother of this doctrine was weakness. To allow a crime to be committed, even against yourself, when you can prevent it, is next to committing the crime yourself. The church has preached the doctrine of non-resistance, and under that banner has shed the blood of millions. In the folds of her sacred vestments have gleamed for centuries the daggers of assassination. With her cunning hands she wove the purple for hypocrisy and placed the crown upon the brow of crime. For more than a thousand years larceny held the scales of justice, hypocrisy wore the mitre and tiara, while beggars scorned the royal sons of toil, and ignorant fear denounced the liberty of thought.

IX.

CHRIST'S MISSION.

HE came, they tell us, to make a revelation, and what did he reveal? "Love thy neighbor as thyself"? That was in the Old Testament. "Love God with all thy heart"? That was in the Old Testament. "Return good for evil"? That was said by Buddha, seven hundred years before Christ was born. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"? That was the doctrine of Lao-tsze. Did he come to give a rule of action? Zoroaster had done this long before: "Whenever thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it." Did he come to tell us of another world? The immortality of the soul had been taught by the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans hundreds of years before he was born. What argument did he make in favor of immortality? What facts did he furnish? What star of hope did he put above the darkness of

this world? Did he come simply to tell us that we should not revenge ourselves upon our enemies? Long before, Socrates had said: "One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we have suffered from him." And Cicero had said: "Let us not listen to those who think we ought to be angry with our enemies, and who believe this to be great and manly. Nothing is so praiseworthy, nothing so clearly shows a great and noble soul, as clemency and readiness to forgive." Is there anything in the literature of the world more nearly perfect than this thought?

Was it from Christ the world learned the first lesson of forbearance, when centuries and centuries before, Chrishna had said, "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again?" Is it possible that the son of God threatened to say to a vast majority of his children, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," while the Buddhist was great and tender enough to say:

"Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation; never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Never will I leave this world of sin and sorrow and struggle until all are delivered. Until then, I will remain and suffer where I am?"

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this, from a Sufi?—"Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love than seventy thousand years of outward worship."

Is there anything comparable to this?—"Whoever carelessly treads on a worm that crawls on the earth, that heartless one is darkly alienate from God."

Is there anything in the New Testament more beautiful than the story of the Sufi?

For seven years a Sufi practised every virtue, and then he mounted the three steps that lead to the doors of Paradise. He knocked and a voice said: "Who is there?" The Sufi replied: "Thy servant, O God." But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi engaged in every

good work. He comforted the sorrowing and divided his substance with the poor. Again he mounted the three steps, again knocked at the doors of Paradise, and again the voice asked: "Who is there?" and the Sufi replied: "Thy slave, O God."—But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi spent in works of charity, in visiting the imprisoned and the sick. Again he mounted the steps, again knocked at the celestial doors. Again he heard the question: "Who is there?" and he replied: "Thyself, O God."—The gates wide open flew.

Is it possible that St. Paul was inspired of God, when he said: "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection."—

"Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man?"

And is it possible that Epictetus, without the slightest aid from heaven, gave to the world this gem of love:

"What is more delightful than to be so dear to your wife, as to be on that account dearer to yourself?"

Did St. Paul express the sentiments of God when he wrote—

"But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord?"

And was the author of this, a poor despised heathen?—

"In whatever house the husband is contented with the wife, and the wife with the husband, in that house will fortune dwell; but upon the house where women are not honored, let a curse be pronounced. Where the wife is honored, there the gods are truly worshiped."

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this?—

"Shall I tell thee where nature is most blest and fair? It is where those we love abide. Though that space be small, it is ample above kingdoms; though it be a desert, through it run the rivers of Paradise."

After reading the curses pronounced in the Old

Testament upon Jew and heathen, the descriptions of slaughter, of treachery and of death, the destruction of women and babes; after you shall have read all the chapters of horror in the New Testament, the threatenings of fire and flame, then read this, from the greatest of human beings:

> "The quality of mercy is not strained:
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
> The throned monarch better than his crown."

X.

ETERNAL PAIN.

UPON passages in the New Testament rests the doctrine of eternal pain. This doctrine subverts every idea of justice. A finite being can neither commit an infinite sin, nor a sin againt the Infinite. A being of infinite goodness and wisdom has no right to create any being whose life is not a blessing. Infinite wisdom has no right to create a failure, and surely a man destined to everlasting failure is not a conspicuous success. The doctrine of eternal punishment is the most infamous of all doctrines—born of ignorance, cruelty and fear. Around the angel of immortality, Christianity has coiled this serpent.

Upon Love's breast the church has placed the eternal asp. And yet in the same book in which is taught this most frightful of dogmas, we are assured that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

A few days ago upon the wide sea, was found a barque called "The Tiger," Captain Kreuger, in command. The vessel had been one hundred and twenty-six days upon the sea. For days the crew had been without water, without food, and were starving. For nine days not a drop had passed their lips. The crew consisted of the captain, a mate, and eleven men. At the end of one hundred and eighteen days from Liverpool they killed the captain's Newfoundland dog. This lasted them four days. During the next five days they had nothing. For weeks they had had no light and were unable to see the compass at night. On the one hundred and twenty-fifth day Captain Kreuger, a German, took a revolver in his hand, stood up before the men, and placing the weapon at his temple said: "Boys, we can't stand this much longer, and to save you all, I am willing to die." The mate grasped the revolver and begged the captain to wait another day. The next day, upon the horizon of their despair, they saw the smoke of the steamship Nebo. They were rescued.

Suppose that Captain Kreuger was not a Christian,

and suppose that he had sent the ball crashing through his brain, and had done so simply to keep the crew from starvation, do you tell me that a God of infinite mercy would forever damn that man?

Do not misunderstand me. I insist that every passage in the Bible upholding crime was written by savage man. I insist that if there is a God, he is not, never was, and never will be in favor of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, or religious persecution. Does any Christian believe that if the real God were to write a book now, he would uphold the crimes commanded in the Old Testament? Has Jehovah improved? Has infinite mercy become more merciful? Has infinite wisdom intellectually advanced?

XI.

WILL any one claim that the passages upholding slavery have liberated mankind? Are we indebted to polygamy for our modern homes? Was religious liberty born of that infamous verse in which the husband is commanded to kill his wife for worshiping an unknown God?

The usual answer to these objections is, that no country has ever been civilized without a Bible. The Jews were the only people to whom Jehovah made his will directly known. Were they better than other nations? They read the Old Testament and one of the effects of such reading was, that they crucified a kind, loving, and perfectly innocent man. Certainly they could not have done worse, without a Bible. In crucifying Christ the Jews followed the teachings of his Father. If Jehovah was in fact God, and if that God took upon himself flesh and came among the Jews, and preached what the Jews understood to be blasphemy; and if the Jews in accordance with the laws given by this same Jehovah to

Moses, crucified him, then I say, and I say it with infinite reverence, he reaped what he had sown. He became the victim of his own injustice.

But I insist that these things are not true. I insist that the real God, if there is one, never commanded man to enslave his fellow-man, never told a mother to sell her babe, never established polygamy, never urged one nation to exterminate another, and never told a husband to kill his wife because she suggested the worship of another God.

From the aspersions of the pulpit, from the slanders of the church, I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity. I insist that the Old Testament would be a better book with all these passages left out; and whatever may be said of the rest of the Bible, the passages to which I have called attention can, with vastly more propriety, be attributed to a devil than to a god.

Take from the New Testament the idea that belief is necessary to salvation; that Christ was offered as an atonement for the sins of mankind; that heaven is the reward of faith, and hell the penalty of honest investigation, and that the punishment of the human soul will go on forever; take

from it all miracles and foolish stories, and I most cheerfully admit that the good passages are true. If they are true, it makes no difference whether they are inspired or not. Inspiration is only necessary to give authority to that which is repugnant to human reason. Only that which never happened needs to be substantiated by a miracle.

The universe is natural.

The church must cease to insist that passages upholding the institutions of savage men were inspired of God. The dogma of atonement must be abandoned. Good deeds must take the place of faith. The savagery of eternal punishment must be renounced. It must be admitted that credulity is not a virtue, and that investigation is not a crime. It must be admitted that miracles are the children of mendacity, and that nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, unbroken, sublime, and eternal procession of causes and effects. Reason must be the arbiter. Inspired books attested by miracles cannot stand against a demonstrated fact. A religion that does not command the respect of the greatest minds will, in a little while, excite the mockery of all.

A man who does not believe in intellectual liberty is a barbarian. Is it possible that God is intolerant? Could there be any progress, even in heaven, without intellectual liberty? Is the freedom of the future to exist only in perdition? Is it not, after all, barely possible that a man acting like Christ can be saved? Is a man to be eternally rewarded for believing according to evidence, without evidence, or against evidence? Are we to be saved because we are good, or because another was virtuous? Is credulity to be winged and crowned, whilst honest doubt is chained and damned.

If Jehovah, was in fact God, he knew the end from the beginning. He knew that his Bible would be a breast-work behind which all tyranny and hypocrisy would crouch. He knew that his Bible would be the auction-block on which women would stand while their babes were sold from their arms. He knew that this Bible would be quoted by tyrants; that it would be the defence of robbers called kings, and of hypocrites called priests. He knew that he had taught the Jewish people nothing of importance. He knew that he had found them free and left them

slaves. He knew that he had never fulfilled a single promise made to them. He knew that while other nations had advanced in art and science his chosen people were savage still. He promised them the world, and gave them a desert. He promised them liberty and he made them slaves. He promised them victory and he gave them defeat. He said they should be kings and he made them serfs. He promised them universal empire and gave them exile. When one finishes the Old Testament he is compelled to say: "Nothing can add to the misery of a nation whose king is Jehovah!"

The Old Testament filled this world with tyranny and injustice, and the New gives us a future filled with pain for nearly all of the sons of men.

The Old Testament describes the hell of the past, and the New the hell of the future.

The Old Testament tells us the frightful things that God has done, the New the frightful things that he will do.

These two books give us the sufferings of the past and the future—the injustice, the agony and the tears of both worlds.

ORTHODOXY.

A LECTURE.

ORTHODOXY.

IT is utterly inconceivable that any man believing in the truth of the Christian religion should publicly deny it, because he who believes in that religion would believe that, by a public denial, he would peril the eternal salvation of his soul. It is conceivable, and without any great effort of the mind, that millions who do not believe in the Christian religion should openly say that they did. In a country where religion is supposed to be in power—where it has rewards for pretence, where it pays a premium upon hypocrisy, where it at least is willing to purchase silence—it is easily conceivable that millions pretend to believe what they do not. And yet I believe it has been charged against myself not only that I was insincere, but that I took the side I am on for the sake of popularity; and the audience to-night goes far toward justifying the accusation.

Orthodox Religion Dying Out.

It gives me immense pleasure to say to this audience that orthodox religion is dying out of the civi-

lized world. It is a sick man. It has been attacked with two diseases—softening of the brain and ossification of the heart. It is a religion that no longer satisfies the intelligence of this country; that no longer satisfies the brain; a religion against which the heart of every civilized man and woman protests. It is a religion that gives hope only to a few; that puts a shadow upon the cradle; that wraps the coffin in darkness and fills the future of mankind with flame and fear. It is a religion that I am going to do what little I can while I live to destroy. In its place I want humanity, I want good fellowship, I want intellectual liberty—free lips, the discoveries and inventions of genius, the demonstrations of science—the religion of art, music and poetry—of good houses, good clothes, good wages—that is to say, the religion of this world.

Religious Deaths and Births.

We must remember that this is a world of progress, a world of perpetual change—a succession of coffins and cradles. There is perpetual death, and there is perpetual birth. By the grave of the old, forever stand youth and joy; and when an old religion dies, a better one is born. When we find out that an assertion is a falsehood a shining truth takes its place, and we need not fear the destruction of

the false. The more false we destroy the more room there will be for the true.

There was a time when the astrologer sought to read in the stars the fate of men and nations. The astrologer has faded from the world, but the astronomer has taken his place. There was a time when the poor alchemist, bent and wrinkled and old, over his crucible endeavored to find some secret by which he could change the baser metals into purest gold. The alchemist has gone; the chemist took his place; and, although he finds nothing to change metals into gold, he finds something that covers the earth with wealth. There was a time when the soothsayer and augur flourished. After them came the parson and the priest; and the parson and the priest must go. The preacher must go, and in his place must come the teacher—the real interpreter of Nature. We are done with the supernatural. We are through with the miraculous and the impossible. There was once the prophet who pretended to read the book of the future. His place has been taken by the philosopher, who reasons from cause to effect—who finds the facts by which we are surrounded and endeavors to reason from these premises and to tell what in all probability will happen. The prophet has gone, the philosopher is here. There was a time when man

sought aid from heaven—when he prayed to the deaf sky. There was a time when everything depended on the supernaturalist. That time in Christendom is passing away. We now depend upon the naturalist—not upon the believer in ancient falsehoods, but on the discoverer of facts—on the demonstrater of truths. At last we are beginning to build on a solid foundation, and as we progress, the supernatural dies. The leaders of the intellectual world deny the existence of the supernatural. They take from all superstition its foundation.

The Religion of Reciprocity.

Supernatural religion will fade from this world, and in its place we shall have reason. In the place of the worship of something we know not of, will be the religion of mutual love and assistance—the great religion of reciprocity. Superstition must go. Science will remain. The church dies hard. The brain of the world is not yet developed. There are intellectual diseases as well as physical—there are pestilences and plagues of the mind.

Whenever the new comes the old protests, and fights for its place as long as it has a particle of power. We are now having the same warfare between superstition and science that there was

between the stage coach and the locomotive. But the stage coach had to go. It had its day of glory and power, but it is gone. It went West. In a little while it will be driven into the Pacific. So we find that there is the same conflict between the different sects and different schools not only of philosophy but of medicine.

Recollect that everything except the demonstrated truth is liable to die. That is the order of Nature. Words die. Every language has a cemetery. Every now and then a word dies and a tombstone is erected, and across it is written "obsolete." New words are continually being born. There is a cradle in which a word is rocked. A thought is married to a sound, and a child-word is born. And there comes a time when the word gets old, and wrinkled, and expressionless, and is carried mournfully to the grave. So in the schools of medicine. You can remember, so can I, when the old allopathists, the bleeders and blisterers, reigned supreme. If there was anything the matter with a man they let out his blood. Called to the bedside, they took him on the point of a lancet to the edge of eternity, and then practiced all their art to bring him back. One can hardly imagine how perfect a constitution it took a few years ago to stand the assault of a doctor. And long

after the old practice was found to be a mistake hundreds and thousands of the ancient physicians clung to it, carried around with them, in one pocket a bottle of jalap, and in the other a rusty lancet, sorry that they could not find some patient with faith enough to allow the experiment to be made again.

So these schools, and these theories, and these religions die hard. What else can they do? Like the paintings of the old masters, they are kept alive because so much money has been invested in them. Think of the amount of money that has been invested in superstition! Think of the schools that have been founded for the more general diffusion of useless knowledge! Think of the colleges wherein men are taught that it is dangerous to think, and that they must never use their brains except in the act of faith! Think of the millions and billions of dollars that have been expended in churches, in temples, and in cathedrals! Think of the thousands and thousands of men who depend for their living upon the ignorance of mankind! Think of those who grow rich on credulity and who fatten on faith! Do you suppose they are going to die without a struggle? What are they to do? From the bottom of my heart I sympathize with the poor clergyman that has had all his common sense educated out of

him, and is now to be thrown upon the cold and unbelieving world. His prayers are not answered; he gets no help from on high, and the pews are beginning to criticise the pulpit. What is the man to do? If he suddenly changes he is gone. If he preaches what he really believes he will get notice to quit. And yet, if he and the congregation would come together and be perfectly honest, they would all admit that they believe little and know nothing.

Only a little while ago a couple of ladies were riding together from a revival, late at night, and one said to the other, as they rode along: "I am going to say something that will shock you, and I beg of you never to tell it to anybody else. I am going to tell it to you." "Well, what is it?" Said she: "I do not believe the Bible." The other replied: "Neither do I."

I have often thought how splendid it would be if the ministers could but come together and say: "Now, let us be honest. Let us tell each other, honor bright"—like Dr. Curry, of Chicago, did in the meeting the other day—"just what we believe." They tell a story that in the old time a lot of people, about twenty, were in Texas in a little hotel, and one fellow got up before the fire, put his hands behind him, and said: "Boys, let us all tell our real

names." If the ministers and their congregations would only tell their real thoughts they would find that they are nearly as bad as I am, and that they believe as little.

Orthodoxy dies hard, and its defenders tell us that this fact shows that it is of divine origin. Judaism dies hard. It has lived several thousand years longer than Christianity. The religion of Mohammed dies hard.

Buddhism dies hard. Why do all these religions die hard? Because intelligence increases slowly.

Let me whisper in the ear of the Protestant: Catholicism dies hard. What does that prove? It proves that the people are ignorant and that the priests are cunning.

Let me whisper in the ear of the Catholic: Protestantism dies hard. What does that prove? It proves that the people are superstitious and the preachers stupid.

Let me whisper in all your ears: Infidelity is not dying—it is growing—it increases every day. And what does that prove? It proves that the people are learning more and more—that they are advancing—that the mind is getting free, and that the race is being civilized.

The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know.

The Blows That Have Shattered the Shield and Shivered the Lance of Superstition.

Mohammed.

Mohammed wrested from the disciples of the cross the fairest part of Europe. It was known that he was an impostor, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust and infidelity in the Christian world. Christians made an effort to rescue from the infidels the empty sepulchre of Christ. That commenced in the eleventh century and ended at the close of the thirteenth. Europe was almost depopulated. The fields were left waste, the villages were deserted, nations were impoverished, every man who owed a debt was discharged from payment if he put a cross upon his breast and joined the Crusades. No matter what crime he had committed, the doors of the prison were open for him to join the hosts of the cross. They believed that God would give them victory, and they carried in front of the first Crusade a goat and a goose, believing that both those animals were blessed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And I may say that those same animals are in the lead to-day in the orthodox world. Until the year 1291 they endeavored to gain possession

of that sepulchre, and finally the hosts of Christ were driven back, baffled and beaten,—a poor, miserable, religious rabble. They were driven back, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust in Christendom. You know that at that time the world believed in trial by battle—that God would take the side of the right—and there had been a trial by battle between the cross and the crescent, and Mohammed had been victorious. Was God at that time governing the world? Was he endeavoring to spread his gospel?

The Destruction of Art.

You know that when Christianity came into power it destroyed every statue it could lay its ignorant hands upon. It defaced and obliterated every painting; it destroyed every beautiful building; it burned the manuscripts, both Greek and Latin; it destroyed all the history, all the poetry, all the philosophy it could find, and reduced to ashes every library that it could reach with its torch. And the result was, that the night of the Middle Ages fell upon the human race. But by accident, by chance, by oversight, a few of the manuscripts escaped the fury of religious zeal; and these manuscripts became the seed, the fruit of which is our civilization of to-day. A few statues had been buried; a few forms of beauty were

dug from the earth that had protected them, and now the civilized world is filled with art, the walls are covered with paintings, and the niches filled with statuary. A few manuscripts were found and deciphered. The old languages were learned, and literature was again born. A new day dawned upon mankind. Every effort at mental improvement had been opposed by the church, and yet, the few things saved from the general wreck—a few poems, a few works of the ancient thinkers, a few forms wrought in stone, produced a new civilization destined to overthrow and destroy the fabric of superstition.

The Discovery of America.

What was the next blow that this church received? The discovery of America. The Holy Ghost who inspired men to write the Bible did not know of the existence of this continent, never dreamed of the Western Hemisphere. The Bible left out half the world. The Holy Ghost did not know that the earth is round. He did not dream that the earth is round. He believed it was flat, although he made it himself. At that time heaven was just beyond the clouds. It was there the gods lived, there the angels were, and it was against that heaven that Jacob's ladder leaned when the angels went up and

down. It was to that heaven that Christ ascended after his resurrection. It was up there that the New Jerusalem was, with its streets of gold, and under this earth was perdition. There was where the devils lived; where a pit was dug for all unbelievers, and for men who had brains. I say that for this reason: Just in proportion that you have brains, your chances for eternal joy are lessened, according to this religion. And just in proportion that you lack brains your chances are increased. At last they found that the earth is round. It was circumnavigated by Magellan. In 1519 that brave man set sail. The church told him: "The earth is flat, my friend; don't go, you may fall off the edge." Magellan said: "I have seen the shadow of the earth upon the moon, and I have more confidence in the shadow than I have in the church." The ship went round. The earth was circumnavigated. Science passed its hand above it and beneath it, and where was the old heaven and where was the hell? Vanished forever! And they dwell now only in the religion of superstition. We found there was no place there for Jacob's ladder to lean against; no place there for the gods and angels to live; no place to hold the waters of the deluge; no place to which Christ could have ascended. The foundations of the New Jerusalem

crumbled. The towers and domes fell, and in their places infinite space, sown with an infinite number of stars; not with New Jerusalems, but with countless constellations.

Copernicus and Kepler.

Then man began to grow great, and with that came Astronomy. In 1473 Copernicus was born. In 1543 his great work appeared. In 1616 the system of Copernicus was condemned by the pope, by the infallible Catholic Church, and the church was about as near right upon that subject as upon any other. The system of Copernicus was denounced. And how long do you suppose the church fought that? Let me tell you. It was revoked by Pius VII. in the year of grace 1821. For two hundred and seventy-eight years after the death of Copernicus the church insisted that his system was false, and that the old Bible astronomy was true. Astronomy is the first help that we ever received from heaven. Then came Kepler in 1609, and you may almost date the birth of science from the night that Kepler discovered his first law. That was the break of the day. His first law, that the planets do not move in circles but in ellipses; his second law, that they describe equal spaces in equal times; his third law, that the squares of their periodic times are proportional to the

cubes of their distances. That man gave us the key to the heavens. He opened the infinite book, and in it read three lines.

I have not time to speak of Galileo, of Leonardo da Vinci, of Bruno, and of hundreds of others who contributed to the intellectual wealth of the world.

Special Providence.

The next thing that gave the church a blow was Statistics. We found by taking statistics that we could tell the average length of human life; that this human life did not depend upon infinite caprice; that it depended upon conditions, circumstances, laws and facts, and that these conditions, circumstances, and facts were during long periods of time substantially the same. And now, the man who depends entirely upon special providence gets his life insured. He has more confidence even in one of these companies than he has in the whole Trinity. We found by statistics that there were just so many crimes on an average committed; just so many crimes of one kind and so many of another; just so many suicides, so many deaths by drowning, so many accidents on an average, so many men marrying women, for instance, older than themselves; so many murders of a particular kind; just the same number of mistakes;

and I say to-night, statistics utterly demolish the idea of special providence.

Only the other day a gentleman was telling me of a case of special providence. He knew it. He had been the subject of it. A few years ago he was about to go on a ship when he was detained. He did not go, and the ship was lost with all on board. "Yes!" I said, "Do you think the people who were drowned believed in special providence?" Think of the infinite egotism of such a doctrine. Here is a man that fails to go upon a ship with five hundred passengers and they go down to the bottom of the sea—fathers, mothers, children, and loving husbands and wives waiting upon the shores of expectation. Here is one poor little wretch that did not happen to go! And he thinks that God, the Infinite Being, interfered in his poor little withered behalf and let the rest all go. That is special providence. Why does special providence allow all the crimes? Why are the wife-beaters protected, and why are the wives and children left defenceless if the hand of God is over us all? Who protects the insane? Why does Providence permit insanity? But the church cannot give up special providence. If there is no such thing, then no prayers, no worship, no churches, no priests. What would become of National Thanksgiving?

You know we have a custom every year of issuing a proclamation of thanksgiving. We say to God, "Although you have afflicted all the other countries, although you have sent war, and desolation, and famine on everybody else, we have been such good children that you have been kind to us, and we hope you will keep on." It does not make a bit of difference whether we have good times or not—the thanksgiving is always exactly the same. I remember a few years ago a governor of Iowa got out a proclamation of that kind. He went on to tell how thankful the people were and how prosperous the State had been. There was a young fellow in that State who got out another proclamation, saying that he feared the Lord might be misled by official correspondence; that the governor's proclamation was entirely false; that the State was not prosperous; that the crops had been an almost utter failure; that nearly every farm in the State was mortgaged, and that if the Lord did not believe him, all he asked was that he would send some angel in whom he had confidence, to look the matter over and report.

Charles Darwin.

This century will be called Darwin's century. He was one of the greatest men who ever touched this globe. He has explained more of the phenomena

of life than all of the religious teachers. Write the name of Charles Darwin on the one hand and the name of every theologian who ever lived on the other, and from that name has come more light to the world than from all of those. His doctrine of evolution, his doctrine of the survival of the fittest, his doctrine of the origin of species, has removed in every thinking mind the last vestige of orthodox Christianity. He has not only stated, but he has demonstrated, that the inspired writer knew nothing of this world, nothing of the origin of man, nothing of geology, nothing of astronomy, nothing of nature; that the Bible is a book written by ignorance—at the instigation of fear. Think of the men who replied to him. Only a few years ago there was no person too ignorant to successfully answer Charles Darwin; and the more ignorant he was the more cheerfully he undertook the task. He was held up to the ridicule, the scorn and contempt of the Christian world, and yet when he died, England was proud to put his dust with that of her noblest and her grandest. Charles Darwin conquered the intellectual world, and his doctrines are now accepted facts. His light has broken in on some of the clergy, and the greatest man who to-day occupies the pulpit of one of the orthodox churches, Henry Ward Beecher, is a be-

liever in the theories of Charles Darwin—a man of more genius than all the clergy of that entire church put together.

And yet we are told in this little creed that orthodox religion is about to conquer the world! It will be driven to the wilds of Africa. It must go to some savage country; it has lost its hold upon civilization. It is unfortunate to have a religion that cannot be accepted by the intellect of a nation. It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good religion or none. My pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit the demonstrations of science. Of course, I have not time to recount all the discoveries and events that have assisted in the destruction of superstition. Every fact is an enemy of the church. Every fact is a heretic. Every demonstration is an infidel. Everything that ever really happened testifies against the supernatural.

The church teaches that man was created perfect, and that for six thousand years he has degenerated. Darwin demonstrated the falsity of this dogma. He shows that man has for thousands of ages steadily advanced; that the Garden of Eden is an ignorant myth; that the doctrine of original sin has no foun-

dation in fact; that the atonement is an absurdity; that the serpent did not tempt, and that man did not "fall."

Charles Darwin destroyed the foundation of orthodox Christianity. There is nothing left but faith in what we know could not and did not happen. Religion and science are enemies. One is a superstition; the other is a fact. One rests upon the false, the other upon the true. One is the result of fear and faith, the other of investigation and reason.

The Creeds.

I have been talking a great deal about the orthodox religion. Often, after having delivered a lecture, I have met some good, religious person who has said to me:

"You do not tell it as we believe it."

"Well, but I tell it as you have it written in your creed."

"Oh, we don't mind the creed any more."

"Then, why do you not change it?"

"Oh, well, we understand it as it is, and if we tried to change it, maybe we would not agree."

Possibly the creeds are in the best condition now. There is a tacit understanding that they do not believe them, that there is a way to get around them, and that they can read between the lines; that if they should

meet now to form new creeds they would fail to agree; and that now they can say as they please, except in public. Whenever they do so in public the church, in self-defence, must try them; and I believe in trying every minister that does not preach the doctrine he agrees to. I have not the slightest sympathy with a Presbyterian preacher who endeavors to preach infidelity from a Presbyterian pulpit and receives Presbyterian money. When he changes his views he should step down and out like a man, and say, "I do not believe your doctrine, and I will not preach it. You must hire some other man."

The Latest Creed.

But I find that I have correctly interpreted the creeds. There was put into my hands the new Congregational creed. I have read it, and I will call your attention to it to-night, to find whether that church has made any advance; to find whether the sun of science has risen in the heavens in vain; whether they are still the children of intellectual darkness; whether they still consider it necessary for you to believe something that you by no possibility can understand, in order to be a winged angel forever. Now, let us see what their creed is. I will read a little of it.

They commence by saying that they

"*Believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*"

They say, now, that there is the one personal God; that he is the maker of the universe and its ruler. I again ask the old question, Of what did he make it? If matter has not existed through eternity, then this God made it. Of what did he make it? What did he use for the purpose? There was nothing in the universe except this God. What had the God been doing for the eternity he had been living? He had made nothing—called nothing into existence; never had had an idea, because it is impossible to have an idea unless there is something to excite an idea. What had he been doing? Why does not the Congregational Church tell us? How do they know about this Infinite Being? And if he is infinite how can they comprehend him? What good is it to believe in something that you know you do not understand, and that you never can understand?

In the Episcopalian creed God is described as follows:

"*There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions.*"

Think of that!—without body, parts, or passions. I defy any man in the world to write a better de-

scription of nothing. You cannot conceive of a finer word-painting of a vacuum than "without body, parts, or passions." And yet this God, without passions, is angry at the wicked every day; this God, without passions, is a jealous God, whose anger burneth to the lowest hell. This God, without passions, loves the whole human race; and this God, without passions, damns a large majority of mankind. This God without body, walked in the Garden of Eden, in the cool of the day. This God, without body, talked with Adam and Eve. This God, without body, or parts met Moses upon Mount Sinai, appeared at the door of the tabernacle, and talked with Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. This description of God is simply an effort of the church to describe a something of which it has no conception.

God as a Governor.

So, too, I find the following:

"*We believe that the Providence of God, by which he executes his eternal purposes in the government of the world, is in and over all events.*"

Is God the governor of the world? Is this established by the history of nations? What evidence can you find, if you are absolutely honest and not frightened, in the history of the world, that this uni-

verse is presided over by an infinitely wise and good God?

How do you account for Russia? How do you account for Siberia? How do you account for the fact that whole races of men toiled beneath the master's lash for ages without recompense and without reward? How do you account for the fact that babes were sold from the arms of mothers—arms that had been reached toward God in supplication? How do you account for it? How do you account for the existence of martyrs? How do you account for the fact that this God allows people to be burned simply for loving him? Is justice always done? Is innocence always acquitted? Do the good succeed? Are the honest fed? Are the charitable clothed? Are the virtuous shielded? How do you account for the fact that the world has been filled with pain, and grief, and tears? How do you account for the fact that people have been swallowed by earthquakes, overwhelmned by volcanoes, and swept from the earth by storms? Is it easy to account for famine, for pestilence and plague if there be above us all a Ruler infinitely good, powerful and wise?

I do not say there is none. I do not know. As I have said before, this is the only planet I was ever on. I live in one of the rural districts of the universe,

and do not know about these things as much as the clergy pretend to, but if they know no more about the other world than they do about this, it is not worth mentioning.

How do they answer all this? They say that God "permits" it. What would you say to me if I stood by and saw a ruffian beat out the brains of a child, when I had full and perfect power to prevent it? You would say truthfully that I was as bad as the murderer. Is it possible for this God to prevent it? Then, if he does not he is a fiend; he is no god. But they say he "permits" it. What for? So that we may have freedom of choice. What for? So that God may find, I suppose, who are good and who are bad. Did he not know that when he made us? Did he not know exactly just what he was making? Why should he make those whom he knew would be criminals? If I should make a machine that would walk your streets and take the lives of people you would hang me. And if God made a man whom he knew would commit murder, then God is guilty of that murder. If God made a man knowing that he would beat his wife, that he would starve his children, that he would strew on either side of his path of life the wrecks of ruined homes, then I say the being who knowingly called that wretch into

existence is directly responsible. And yet we are to find the providence of God in the history of nations. What little I have read shows me that when man has been helped, man has done it; when the chains of slavery have been broken, they have been broken by man; when something bad has been done in the government of mankind, it is easy to trace it to man, and to fix the responsibility upon human beings. You need not look to the sky; you need throw neither praise nor blame upon gods; you can find the efficient causes nearer home—right here.

The Love of God.

What is the next thing I find in this creed?

"*We believe that man was made in the image of God, that he might know, love, and obey God, and enjoy him forever.*"

I do not believe that anybody ever did love God, because nobody ever knew anything about him. We love each other. We love something that we know. We love something that our experience tells us is good and great and beautiful. We cannot by any possibility love the unknown. We can love truth, because truth adds to human happiness. We can love justice, because it preserves human joy. We can love charity. We can love every form of goodness that we know, or of which we can conceive, but we

cannot love the infinitely unknown. And how can we be made in the image of something that has neither body, parts, nor passions?

The Fall of Man.

The Congregational Church has not outgrown the doctrine of "original sin." We are told that:

"*Our first parents, by disobedience, fell under the condemnation of God, and that all men are so alienated from God that there is no salvation from the guilt and power of sin except through God's redeeming power.*"

Is there an intelligent man or woman now in the world who believes in the Garden of Eden story? If you find any man who believes it, strike his forehead and you will hear an echo. Something is for rent. Does any intelligent man now believe that God made man of dust, and woman of a rib, and put them in a garden, and put a tree in the midst of it? Was there not room outside of the garden to put his tree, if he did not want people to eat his apples?

If I did not want a man to eat my fruit, I would not put him in my orchard.

Does anybody now believe in the story of the serpent? I pity any man or woman who, in this nineteenth century, believes in that childish fable. Why did Adam and Eve disobey? Why, they were

tempted. By whom? The devil. Who made the devil? God. What did God make him for? Why did he not tell Adam and Eve about this serpent? Why did he not watch the devil, instead of watching Adam and Eve? Instead of turning them out, why did he not keep him from getting in? Why did he not have his flood first, and drown the devil, before he made a man and woman.

And yet, people who call themselves intelligent—professors in colleges and presidents of venerable institutions—teach children and young men that the Garden of Eden story is an absolute historical fact. I defy any man to think of a more childish thing. This God, waiting around Eden—knowing all the while what would happen—having made them on purpose so that it would happen, then does what? Holds all of us responsible, and we were not there. Here is a representative before the constituency had been born. Before I am bound by a representative I want a chance to vote for or against him; and if I had been there, and known all the circumstances, I should have voted "No!" And yet, I am held responsible.

We are told by the Bible and by the churches that through this fall of man

"*Sin and death entered the world.*"

According to this, just as soon as Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, God began to contrive ways by which he could destroy the lives of his children. He invented all the diseases—all the fevers and coughs and colds—all the pains and plagues and pestilences—all the aches and agonies, the malaria and spores; so that when we take a breath of air we admit into our lungs unseen assassins; and, fearing that some might live too long, even under such circumstances, God invented the earthquake and volcano, the cyclone and lightning, animalcules to infest the heart and brain, so small that no eye can detect—no instrument reach. This was all owing to the disobedience of Adam and Eve!

In his infinite goodness, God invented rheumatism and gout and dyspepsia, cancers and neuralgia, and is still inventing new diseases. Not only this, but he decreed the pangs of mothers, and that by the gates of love and life should crouch the dragons of death and pain. Fearing that some might, by accident, live too long, he planted poisonous vines and herbs that looked like food. He caught the serpents he had made and gave them fangs and curious organs, ingeniously devised to distill and deposit the deadly drop. He changed the nature of the beasts, that they might feed on human flesh. He

cursed a world, and tainted every spring and source of joy. He poisoned every breath of air; corrupted even light, that it might bear disease on every ray; tainted every drop of blood in human veins; touched every nerve, that it might bear the double fruit of pain and joy; decreed all accidents and mistakes that maim and hurt and kill, and set the snares of life-long grief, baited with present pleasure,—with a moment's joy. Then and there he foreknew and foreordained all human tears. And yet all this is but the prelude, the introduction, to the infinite revenge of the good God. Increase and multiply all human griefs until the mind has reached imagination's farthest verge, then add eternity to time, and you may faintly tell, but never can conceive, the infinite horrors of this doctrine called "The Fall of Man."

The Atonement.

We are further told that:

"*All men are so alienated from God that there is no alleviation from the guilt and power of sin, except through God's redeeming grace;*"

And that:

"*We believe that the love of God to sinful man has found its highest expression in the redemptive work of his Son, who became man, uniting his divine nature with our human nature in one person; who was*

tempted like other men and yet without sin, and by his humiliation, his holy obedience, his sufferings, his death on the cross, and his resurrection, became a perfect redeemer; whose sacrifice of himself for the sins of the world declares the righteousness of God, and is the sole and sufficient ground of forgiveness and of reconciliation with him."

The absurdity of the doctrine known as "The Fall of Man," gave birth to that other absurdity known as "The Atonement." So that now it is insisted that, as we are rightfully charged with the sin of somebody else, we can rightfully be credited with the virtues of another. Let us leave out of our philosophy both these absurdities. Our creed will read a great deal better with both of them out, and will make far better sense.

Now, in consequence of Adam's sin, everybody is alienated from God. How? Why? Oh, we are all depraved, you know; we all do wrong. Well, why? Is that because we are depraved? No. Why do we make so many mistakes? Because there is only one right way, and there is an almost infinite number of wrong ways; and as long as we are not perfect in our intellects we must make mistakes. "There is no darkness but ignorance," and alienation, as they call it, from God, is simply a lack of

intellect. Why were we not given better brains? That may account for the alienation.

The church teaches that every soul that finds its way to the shore of this world is against God—naturally hates God; that the little dimpled child in the cradle is simply a chunk of depravity. Everybody against God! It is a libel upon the human race; it is a libel upon all the men who have worked for wife and child; upon all mothers who have suffered and labored, wept and worked; upon all the men who have died for their country; upon all who have fought for human liberty. Leave out the history of religion and there is little left to prove the depravity of man.

Everybody that comes is against God! Every soul, they think, is like the wrecked Irishman, who drifted to an unknown island, and as he climbed the shore saw a man and said to him, "Have you a Government here?" The man replied "We have." "Well," said he, "I'm forninst it!"

The church teaches us that such is the attitude of every soul in the universe of God. Ought a god to take any credit to himself for making depraved people? A god that cannot make a soul that is not totally depraved, I respectfully suggest, should retire from the business. And if a god has made us,

knowing that we are totally depraved, why should we go to the same being to be "born again?"

The Second Birth.

The church insists that we must be "born again," and that all who are not the subjects of this second birth are heirs of everlasting fire. Would it not have been much better to have made another Adam and Eve? Would it not have been better to change Noah and his people, so that after that a second birth would not have been necessary? Why not purify the fountain of all human life? Why allow the earth to be peopled with depraved and monstrous beings, each one of whom must be re-made, re-formed, and born again?

And yet, even reformation is not enough. If the man who steals becomes perfectly honest, that is not enough; if the man who hates his fellow-man, changes and loves his fellow-man, that is not enough; he must go through that mysterious thing called the second birth; he must be born again. He must have faith; he must believe something that he does not understand, and experience what they call "conversion." According to the church, nothing so excites the wrath of God—nothing so corrugates the brows of Jehovah with hatred—as a man relying on his own good works. He must admit that he ought

to be damned, and that of the two he prefers it, before God will consent to save him.

I met a man the other day, who said to me, "I am a Unitarian Universalist." "What do you mean by that?" I asked. "Well," said he, "this is what I mean: the Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned, and the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him, and I believe them both."

Is it possible that the sacrifice of a perfect being was acceptable to God? Will he accept the agony of innocence for the punishment of guilt? Will he release Barabbas and crucify Christ?

Inspiration.

What is the next thing in this great creed?

"*We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the record of God's revelation of Himself in the work of redemption; that they were written by men under the special guidance of the holy spirit; that they are able to make wise unto salvation; and that they constitute an authoritative standard by which religious teaching and human conduct are to be regulated and judged.*

This is the creed of the Congregational Church; that is, the result reached by a high-joint commission appointed to draw up a creed for their churches; and there we have the statement that the Bible was

written "by men under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit."

What part of the Bible? All of it? All of it. And yet what is this Old Testament that was written by an infinitely good God? The being who wrote it did not know the shape of the world he had made; knew nothing of human nature. He commands men to love him, as if one could love upon command. The same God upheld the institution of human slavery; and the church says that the Bible that upholds that institution was written by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then I disagree with the Holy Spirit.

This church tells us that men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit upheld the institution of polygamy —I deny it; that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit these men upheld wars of extermination and conquest—I deny it; that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit these men wrote that it was right for a man to destroy the life of his wife if she happened to differ with him on the subject of religion—I deny it. And yet that is the book now upheld in this creed of the Congregational Church.

If the devil had written upon the subject of slavery, which side would he have taken? Let every minister answer. If you knew the devil had written a

work on human slavery, in your judgment, would he uphold slavery, or denounce it? Would you regard it as any evidence that he ever wrote it, if it upheld slavery? And yet, here you have a work upholding slavery, and you say that it was written by an infinitely good God! If the devil upheld polygamy, would you be surprised? If the devil wanted to kill men for differing with him would you be astonished? If the devil told a man to kill his wife, would you be shocked? And yet, you say, that is exactly what God did. If there be a God, then that creed is blasphemy. That creed is a libel upon him who sits on heaven's throne. If there be a God, I ask him to write in the book in which my account is kept, that I denied these lies for him.

I do not believe in a slaveholding God! I do not worship a polygamous Holy Ghost, nor a Son who threatens eternal pain; I will not get upon my knees before any being who commands a husband to slay his wife because she expresses her honest thought. Suppose a book should be found old as the Old Testament in which slavery, polygamy and war are all denounced, would Christians think that it was written by the devil?

Did it ever occur to you that if God wrote the Old Testament, and told the Jews to crucify or kill

anybody that disagreed with them on religion, and that this God afterward took upon himself flesh and came to Jerusalem, and taught a different religion, and the Jews killed him—did it ever occur to you that he reaped exactly what he had sown? Did it ever occur to you that he fell a victim to his own tyranny, and was destroyed by his own hand? Of course I do not believe that any God ever was the author of the Bible, or that any God was ever crucified, or that any God was ever killed, or ever will be, but I want to ask you that question.

Take this Old Testament, then, with all its stories of murder and massacre; with all its foolish and cruel fables; with all its infamous doctrines; with its spirit of caste; with its spirit of hatred, and tell me whether it was written by a good God. If you will read the maledictions and curses of that book, you will think that God, like Lear, had divided heaven among his daughters, and then, in the insanity of despair, had launched his curses on the human race.

And yet, I must say—I must admit—that the Old Testament is better than the New. In the Old Testament, when God had a man dead, he let him alone. When he saw him quietly in his grave he was satisfied. The muscles relaxed, and the frown gave place to a smile. But in the New Testament

the trouble commences at death. In the New Testament God is to wreak his revenge forever and ever. It was reserved for one who said, "Love your enemies," to tear asunder the veil between time and eternity and fix the horrified gaze of man upon the gulfs of eternal fire. The New Testament is just as much worse than the Old, as hell is worse than sleep; just as much worse, as infinite cruelty is worse than dreamless rest; and yet, the New Testament is claimed to be a gospel of love and peace.

Is it possible that: "*The Scriptures constitute the authoritative standard by which religious teaching and human conduct are to be regulated and judged*"?

Are we to judge of conduct by the Old Testament, by the New, or by both? According to the Old, the slaveholder was a just and generous man; a polygamist was a model of virtue. According to the New, the worst can be forgiven and the best can be lost. How can any book be a standard, when the standard itself must be measured by human reason? Is there a standard of a standard? Must not the reason be convinced? and, if so, is not the reason of each man the final arbiter of that man? If he takes a book as a standard, does he so take it because it is to him reasonable? In what way is the human reason to be ignored? Why should a book take its

place, unless the reason has been convinced that the book is the proper standard? If this is so, the book rests upon the reason of those who adopt it. Are they to be saved because they act in accordance with their reason, and are others to be damned because they act by the same standard—their reason? No two are alike. Can we demand of all the same result? Suppose the compasses were not constant to the pole—no two compasses exactly alike—would you expect all ships to reach the same harbor?

The Reign of Truth and Love.

I also find in this creed the following:

"*We believe that Jesus Christ came to establish among men the Kingdom of God, the reign of truth and love, of righteousness and peace.*"

Well, that may have been the object of Jesus Christ. I do not deny it. But what was the result? The Christian world has caused more war than all the rest of the world beside. Most of the cunning instruments of death have been devised by Christians. All the wonderful machinery by which the life is blown from men, by which nations are conquered and enslaved—all these machines have been born in Christian brains. And yet he came to bring peace, they say; but the Testament says otherwise: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." And the

sword was brought. What are the Christian nations doing to-day in Europe? Is there a solitary Christian nation that will trust any other? How many millions of Christians are in the uniform of forgiveness, armed with the muskets of love?

There was an old Spaniard on the bed of death, who sent for a priest, and the priest told him that he would have to forgive his enemies before he died. He said, "I have none." "What! no enemies?" "Not one," said the dying man; "I killed the last one three months ago."

How many millions of Christians are now armed and equipped to destroy their fellow-Christians? Who are the men in Europe crying against war? Who wishes to have the nations disarmed? Is it the church? No; the men who do not believe in what they call this religion of peace. When there is a war, and when they make a few thousand widows and orphans; when they strew the plain with dead patriots, Christians assemble in their churches and sing "Te Deum Laudamus." Why? Because he has enabled a few of his children to kill some others of his children. This is the religion of peace —the religion that invented the Krupp gun, that will hurl a ball weighing two thousand pounds through twenty-four inches of solid steel. This is

the religion of peace that covers the sea with men-of-war, clad in mail, in the name of universal forgiveness. This is the religion that drills and uniforms five millions of men to kill their fellows.

The Wars It Brought.

What effect has this religion had upon the nations of the earth? What have the nations been fighting about? What was the Thirty Years' War in Europe for? What was the war in Holland for? Why was it that England persecuted Scotland? Why is it that England persecutes Ireland even to this day? At the bottom of every one of these conflicts you will find a religious question. The religion of Jesus Christ, as preached by his church, causes war, bloodshed, hatred, and all uncharitableness; and why? Because, they say, a certain belief is necessary to salvation. They do not say, if you behave yourself you will get there; they do not say, if you pay your debts and love your wife and love your children, and are good to your friends, and your neighbors, and your country, you will get there; that will do you no good; you have got to believe a certain thing. No matter how bad you are, you can instantly be forgiven; and no matter how good you are, if you fail to believe that which you cannot understand, the moment you get to the day of judg-

ment nothing is left but to damn you, and all the angels will shout "hallelujah."

What do they teach to-day? Nearly every murderer goes to heaven; there is only one step from the gallows to God, only one jerk between the halter and heaven. That is taught by this church.

I believe there ought to be a law to prevent the giving of the slightest religious consolation to any man who has been found guilty of murder. Let a Catholic understand that if he imbrues his hands in his brother's blood, he can have no extreme unction. Let it be understood that he can have no forgiveness through the church; and let the Protestant understand that when he has committed that crime the community will not pray him into heaven. Let him go with his victim. The victim, dying in his sins, goes to hell, and the murderer has the happiness of seeing him there. If heaven grows dull and monotonous, the murderer can again give life to the nerve of pleasure by watching the agony of his victim.

The truth is, Christianity has not made friends; it has made enemies. It is not, as taught, the religion of peace, it is the religion of war. Why should a Christian hesitate to kill a man that his God is waiting to damn? Why should a Christian not destroy an infidel who is trying to assassinate his soul? Why

should a Christian pity an unbeliever—one who has rejected the Bible—when he knows that God will be pitiless forever? And yet we are told, in this creed, that "*we believe in the ultimate prevalence of the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth.*"

What makes you? Do you judge from the manner in which you are getting along now? How many people are being born a year? About fifty millions. How many are you converting a year, really, truthfully? Five or six thousand. I think I have overstated the number. Is orthodox Christianity on the increase? No. There are a hundred times as many unbelievers in orthodox Christianity as there were ten years ago. What are you doing in the missionary world? How long is it since you converted a Chinaman? A fine missionary religion, to send missionaries with their Bibles and tracts to China, but if a Chinaman comes here, mob him, simply to show him the difference between the practical and theoretical workings of the Christian religion. How long since you have had an intelligent convert in India? In my judgment, never; there never has been an intelligent Hindoo converted from the time the first missionary put his foot on that soil; and never, in my judgment, has an intelligent Chinaman been converted since the first missionary touched

that shore. Where are they? We hear nothing of them, except in the reports. They get money from poor old ladies, trembling on the edge of the grave, and go and tell them stories, how hungry the average Chinaman is for a copy of the New Testament, and paint the sad condition of a gentleman in the interior of Africa without the works of Dr. McCosh, longing for a copy of *The Princeton Review*,—in my judgment, a pamphlet that would suit a savage. Thus money is scared from the dying, and frightened from the old and feeble.

About how long is it before this kingdom is to be established? No one objects to the establishment of peace and good will. Every good man longs for the time when war shall cease. We are all hoping for a day of universal justice—a day of universal freedom—when man shall control himself, when the passions shall become obedient to the intelligent will. But the coming of that day will not be hastened by preaching the doctrines of total depravity and eternal revenge. That sun will not rise the quicker for preaching salvation by faith. The star that shines above that dawn, the herald of that day, is Science, not superstition,—Reason, not religion.

To show you how little advance has been made, how many intellectual bats and mental owls still

haunt the temple, still roost above the altar, I call your attention to the fact that the Congregational Church, according to this creed, still believes in the resurrection of the dead, and in their Confession of Faith, attached to the creed, I find that they also believe in the literal resurrection of the body.

The Resurrection.

Does anybody believe that, who has the courage to think for himself? Here is a man, for instance, that weighs 200 pounds and gets sick and dies weighing 120; how much will he weigh in the morning of the resurrection? Here is a cannibal, who eats another man; and we know that the atoms you eat go into your body and become a part of you. After the cannibal has eaten the missionary, and appropriated his atoms to himself, and then dies, to whom will the atoms belong in the morning of the resurrection? Could the missionary maintain an action of replevin, and if so, what would the cannibal do for a body? It has been demonstrated, in so far as logic can demonstrate anything, that there is no creation and no destruction in Nature. It has been demonstrated, again and again, that the atoms in us have been in millions of other beings; have grown in the forests and in the grass, have blossomed in flowers, and been in the metals. In other

words, there are atoms in each one of us that have been in millions of others; and when we die, these atoms return to the earth, again appear in grass and trees, are again eaten by animals, and again devoured by countless vegetable mouths and turned into wood; and yet this church, in the nineteenth century, in a council composed of, and presided over by, professors and presidents of colleges and theologians, solemnly tells us that it believes in the literal resurrection of the body. This is almost enough to make one despair of the future—almost enough to convince a man of the immortality of the absurd. They know better. There is not one so ignorant but knows better.

The Judgment-Day.

And what is the next thing?

"*We believe in a final judgment, the issues of which are everlasting punishment and everlasting life.*"

At the final judgment all of us will be there. The thousands, and millions, and billions, and trillions, and quadrillions that have died will be there. The books will be opened, and each case will be called. The sheep and the goats will be divided. The unbelievers will be sent to the left, while the faithful will proudly walk to the right. The saved, without a tear, will bid an eternal farewell to those who loved

them here—to those they loved. Nearly all the human race will go away to everlasting punishment, and the fortunate few to eternal life. This is the consolation of the Congregational Church! This is the hope that dispels the gloom of life!

Pious Evasions.

When the clergy are caught, they give a different meaning to the words and say the world was not made in seven days. They say "good whiles"—"epochs."

And in this same Confession of Faith and in this creed they say that the Lord's day is holy—every seventh day. Suppose you lived near the North Pole where the day is three months long. Then which day would you keep? If you could get to the North Pole you could prevent Sunday from ever overtaking you. You could walk around the other way faster than the world could revolve. How would you keep Sunday then? Suppose we invent something that can go one thousand miles an hour? We can chase Sunday clear around the globe. Is there anything that can be more perfectly absurd than that a space of time can be holy? You might as well talk about a virtuous vacuum. We are now told that the Bible is not a scientific book, and that after all we cannot depend on what God said four

thousand years ago—that his ways are not as our ways—that we must accept without evidence, and believe without understanding.

I heard the other night of an old man. He was not very well educated, and he got into the notion that he must have reading of the Bible and family worship. There was a bad boy in the family, and they were reading the Bible by course. In the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians is this passage: "Behold, brethren, I show you a mystery; we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed." This boy had rubbed out the "c" in "changed." So when the old man put on his spectacles, and got down his Bible, he read: "Behold, brethren, I show you a mystery, we shall not all die, but we shall all be hanged." The old lady said, "Father, I don't think it reads that way." He said, "Who is reading this?" "Yes mother, it says 'hanged,' and, more than that, I see the sense of it. Pride is the besetting sin of the human heart, and if there is anything calculated to take the pride out of a man it is hanging." It is in this way that ministers avoid and explain the discoveries of Science.

People ask me, if I take away the Bible what are we going to do? How can we get along without the revelation that no one understands? What are

we going to do if we have no Bible to quarrel about What are we to do without hell? What are we going to do with our enemies? What are we going to do with the people we love but don't like?

"No Bible, No Civilization."

They tell me that there never would have been any civilization if it had not been for this Bible. The Jews had a Bible; the Romans had not. Which had the greater and the grander government? Let us be honest. Which of those nations produced the greatest poets, the greatest soldiers, the greatest orators, the greatest statesmen, the greatest sculptors? Rome had no Bible. God cared nothing for the Roman Empire. He let the men come up by chance. His time was taken up with the Jewish people. And yet Rome conquered the world, including the chosen people of God. The people who had the Bible were defeated by the people who had not. How was it possible for Lucretius to get along without the Bible?—how did the great and glorious of that empire? And what shall we say of Greece? No Bible. Compare Athens with Jerusalem. From Athens come the beauty and intellectual grace of the world. Compare the mythology of Greece with the mythology of Judea; one covering the earth with beauty, and the other filling heaven with hatred and

injustice. The Hindoos had no Bible; they had been forsaken by the Creator, and yet they became the greatest metaphysicians of the world. Egypt had no Bible. Compare Egypt with Judea. What are we to do without the Bible? What became of the Jews who had a Bible? Their temple was destroyed and their city was taken; and they never found real prosperity until their God deserted them. The Turks attributed all their victories to the Koran. The Koran gave them their victories over the believers in the Bible. The priests of each nation have accounted for the prosperity of that nation by its religion.

The Christians mistake an incident for a cause, and honestly imagine that the Bible is the foundation of modern liberty and law. They forget physical conditions, make no account of commerce, care nothing for inventions and discoveries, and ignorantly give the credit to their inspired book.

The foundations of our civilization were laid centuries before Christianity was known. The intelligence of courage, of self-government, of energy, of industry, that uniting made the civilization of this century, did not come alone from Judea, but from every nation of the ancient world.

Miracles of the New Testament.

There are many things in the New Testament that I cannot accept as true.

I cannot believe in the miraculous origin of Jesus Christ. I believe he was the son of Joseph and Mary; that Joseph and Mary had been duly and legally married; that he was the legitimate offspring of that union. Nobody ever believed the contrary until he had been dead at least one hundred and fifty years. Neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke ever dreamed that he was of divine origin. He did not say to either Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or to any one in their hearing, that he was the Son of God, or that he was miraculously conceived. He did not say it. It may be asserted that he said it to John, but John did not write the gospel that bears his name. The angel Gabriel, who, they say, brought the news, never wrote a word upon the subject. The mother of Christ never wrote a word upon the subject. His alleged father never wrote a word upon the subject, and Joseph never admitted the story. We are lacking in the matter of witnesses. I would not believe such a story now. I cannot believe that it happened then. I would not believe people I know, much less would I believe people I do not know.

At that time Matthew and Luke believed that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary. And why? they say he descended from David, and in order to show that he was of the blood of David, they gave the genealogy of Joseph. And if Joseph was not his father, why did they not give the genealogy of Pontius Pilate or of Herod? Could they, by giving the genealogy of Joseph, show that he was of the blood of David if Joseph was in no way related to Christ? And yet that is the position into which the Christian world is driven. In the New Testament we find that in giving the genealogy of Christ it says, "who was the son of Joseph?" and the church has interpolated the words "as was supposed." Why did they give a supposed genealogy? It will not do. And that is a thing that cannot in any way, by any human testimony, be established.

If it is important for us to know that he was the Son of God, I say, then, that it devolves upon God to give us the evidence. Let him write it across the face of the heavens, in every language of mankind. If it is necessary for us to believe it, let it grow on every leaf next year. No man should be damned for not believing, unless the evidence is overwhelming. And he ought not to be made to depend upon say so, or upon "as was supposed." He should have

it directly, for himself. A man says that God told him a certain thing, and he tells me, and I have only his word. He may have been deceived. If God has a message for me he ought to tell it to me, and not to somebody that has been dead four or five thousand years, and in another language.

Besides, God may have changed his mind on many things; he has on slavery, and polygamy at least, according to the church; and yet his church now wants to go and destroy polygamy in Utah with the sword. Why do they not send missionaries there with copies of the Old Testament? By reading the lives of Abraham and Isaac, and Lot, and a few other patriarchs who ought to have been in the penitentiary, maybe they can soften their hearts.

More Miracles.

There is another miracle I do not believe,—the resurrection. I want to speak about it as we would about any ordinary transaction. In the first place, I do not believe that any miracle was ever performed, and if there was, you cannot prove it. Why? Because it is altogether more reasonable to believe that the people were mistaken about it than that it happened. And why? Because, according to human experience, we know that people will not always tell the truth, and we never saw a miracle ourselves, and

we must be governed by our experience; and if we go by our experience, we must say that the miracle never happened—that the witnesses were mistaken.

A man comes into Jerusalem, and the first thing he does is to cure the blind. He lets the light of day visit the night of blindness. The eyes are opened, and the world is again pictured upon the brain. Another man is clothed with leprosy. He touches him and the disease falls from him, and he stands pure, and clean, and whole. Another man is deformed, wrinkled, and bent. He touches him, and throws around him again the garment of youth. A man is in his grave, and he says, "Come forth!" And the man walks in life, feeling his heart throb and his blood going joyously through his veins. They say that actually happened. I do not know.

There is one wonderful thing about the dead people that were raised—we do not hear of them any more. What became of them? If there was a man in this city who had been raised from the dead, I would go to see him to-night. I would say, "Where were you when you got the notice to come back? What kind of a country is it? What kind of opening there for a young man? How did you like it? Did you meet there the friends you had lost? Is there a world without death, without

pain, without a tear? Is there a land without a grave, and where good-bye is never heard?" Nobody ever paid the slightest attention to the dead who had been raised. They did not even excite interest when they died the second time. Nobody said, "Why, that man is not afraid. He has been there once. He has walked through the valley of the shadow." Not a word. They pass quietly away.

I do not believe these miracles. There is something wrong somewhere about that business. I may suffer eternal puuishment for all this, but I cannot, I do not, believe.

There was a man who did all these things, and thereupon they crucified him. Let us be honest. Suppose a man came into this city and should meet a funeral procession, and say, "Who is dead?" and they should reply, "The son of a widow; her only support." Suppose he should say to the procession, "Halt!" and to the undertaker, "Take out that coffin, unscrew that lid. Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" and the dead should step from the coffin and in a moment afterward hold his mother in his arms. Suppose this stranger should go to your cemetery and find some woman holding a little child in each hand, while the tears fell upon a new-made grave, and he should say to her, "Who lies buried here?"

and she should reply, "My husband;" and he should cry, "I say unto thee, oh grave, give up thy dead!" and the husband should rise, and in a moment after have his lips upon his wife's, and the little children with their arms around his neck; do you think that the people of this city would kill him? Do you think any one would wish to crucify him? Do you not rather believe that every one who had a loved one out in that cemetery would go to him, even upon their knees, and beg him to give back their dead? Do you believe that any man was ever crucified who was the master of death?

Let me tell you to-night if there shall ever appear upon this earth the master, the monarch, of death, all human knees will touch the earth. He will not be crucified. All the living who fear death; all the living who have lost a loved one, will bow to him. And yet we are told that this worker of miracles, this man who could clothe the dead dust in the throbbing flesh of life, was crucified. I do not believe that he worked the miracles, I do not believe that he raised the dead, I do not believe that he claimed to be the Son of God. These things were told long after he was dead; told because the ignorant multitude demanded mystery and wonder; told, because at that time the miraculous was believed of all the

illustrious dead. Stories that made Christianity powerful then, weaken it now. He who gains a triumph in a conflict with a devil, will be defeated by science.

There is another thing about these foolish miracles. All could have been imitated. Men could pretend to be blind; confederates could feign sickness, and even death.

It is not very difficult to limp or to hold an arm as though it were paralyzed; or to say that one is afflicted with "an issue of blood." It is easy to say that the son of a widow was raised from the dead, and if you fail to give the name of the son, or his mother, or the time and place where the wonder occurred, it is quite difficult to show that it did not happen.

No one can be called upon to disprove anything that has not apparently been established. I say apparently, because there can be no real evidence in support of a miracle.

How could we prove, for instance, the miracle of the loaves and fishes? There were plenty of other loaves and other fishes in the world? Each one of the five thousand could have had a loaf and a fish with him. We would have to show that there was no other possible way for the people to get the bread and fish except by miracle, and then we are only half

through. We must then show that they did, in fact, get enough to feed five thousand people, and that more was left than was had in the beginning.

Of course this is simply impossible. And let me ask, why was not the miracle substantiated by some of the multitude?

Would it not have been a greater wonder if Christ had *created* instead of multiplied the loaves and fishes?

How can we now prove that a certain person more than eighteen hundred years ago was possessed by seven devils?

How was it ever possible to prove a thing like that?

How can it be established that some evil spirits could talk while others were dumb, and that the dumb ones were the hardest to control?

If Christ wished to convince his fellow-men by miracles, why did he not do something that could not by any means have been a counterfeit?

Instead of healing a withered arm, why did he not find some man whose arm had been cut off, and make another grow?

If he wanted to raise the dead, why did he not raise some man of importance, some one known to all?

Why did he do his miracles in the obscurity of the village, in the darkness of the hovel?

Why call back to life people so insignificant that the public did not know of their death?

Suppose that in May, 1865, a man had pretended to raise some person by the name of Smith from the dead, and suppose a religion had been founded on that miracle, would it not be natural for people, hundreds of years after the pretended miracle, to ask why the founder of that religion did not raise from the dead Abraham Lincoln, instead of the unknown and obscure Mr. Smith?

How could any man now, in any court, by any known rule of evidence, substantiate one of the miracles of Christ?

Must we believe anything that cannot in any way be substantiated?

If miracles were necessary to convince men eighteen centuries ago, are they not necessary now?

After all, how many men did Christ convince with his miracles? How many walked beneath the standard of the master of Nature?

How did it happen that so many miracles convinced so few? I will tell you. The miracles were never performed. No other explanation is possible.

It is infinitely absurd to say that a man who cured the sick, the halt and blind, raised the dead, cast out devils, controlled the winds and waves,

created food and held obedient to his will the forces of the world, was put to death by men who knew his superhuman power and who had seen his wondrous works. If the crucifixion was public, the miracles were private. If the miracles had been public, the crucifixion could not have been. Do away with the miracles, and the superhuman character of Christ is destroyed. He becomes what he really was—a man. Do away with the wonders, and the teachings of Christ cease to be authoritative. They are then worth the reason, the truth that is in them, and nothing more. Do away with the miracles, and then we can measure the utterances of Christ with the standard of our reason. We are no longer intellectual serfs, believing what is unreasonable in obedience to the command of a supposed god. We no longer take counsel of our fears, of our cowardice, but boldly defend what our reason maintains.

Christ takes his appropriate place with the other teachers of mankind. His life becomes reasonable and admirable. We have a man who hated oppression; who despised and denounced superstition and hypocrisy; who attacked the heartless church of his time; who excited the hatred of bigots and priests, and who rather than be false to his conception of truth, met and bravely suffered even death.

The Resurrection.

The miracle of the resurrection I do not and cannot believe. If it was the fact, if the dead Christ rose from the grave, why did he not appear to his enemies? Why did he not visit Pontius Pilate? Why did he not call upon Caiaphas, the high priest? upon Herod? Why did he not again enter the temple and end the old dispute with demonstration? Why did he not confront the Roman soldiers who had taken money to falsely swear that his body had been stolen by his friends? Why did he not make another triumphal entry into Jerusalem? Why did he not say to the multitude: "Here are the wounds in my feet, and in my hands, and in my side. I am the one you endeavored to kill, but Death is my slave"? Simply because the resurrection is a myth. It makes no difference with his teachings. They are just as good whether he wrought miracles or not. Twice two are four: that needs no miracle. Twice two are five—a miracle can not help that. Christ's teachings are worth their effect upon the human race. It makes no difference about miracle or wonder. In that day every one believed in the impossible. Nobody had any standing as teacher, philosopher, governor, king, general, about whom

there was not supposed to be something miraculous. The earth was covered with the sons and daughters of gods and goddesses.

In Greece, in Rome, in Egypt, in India, every great man was supposed to have had either a god for his father, or a goddess for his mother. They accounted for genius by divine origin. Earth and heaven were at that time near together. It was but a step for the gods from the blue arch to the green earth. Every lake and valley and mountain top was made rich with legends of the loves of gods. How could the early Christians have made converts to a man, among a people who believed so thoroughly in gods—in gods that had lived upon the earth; among a people who had erected temples to the sons and daughters of gods? Such people could not have been induced to worship a man—a man born among barbarous people, citizen of a nation weak and poor and paying tribute to the Roman power. The early Christians therefore preached the gospel of a god.

The Ascension.

I cannot believe in the miracle of the ascension, in the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ. Where was he going? In the light shed upon this question by the telescope, I again ask, where was he going?

The New Jerusalem is not above us. The abode of the gods is not there. Where was he going? Which way did he go? Of course that depends upon the time of day he left. If he left in the evening, he went exactly the opposite way from that he would have gone had he ascended in the morning. What did he do with his body? How high did he go? In what way did he overcome the intense cold? The nearest station is the moon, two hundred and forty thousand miles away. Again I ask, where did he go? He must have had a natural body, for it was the same body that died. His body must have been material, otherwise he would not as he rose have circled with the earth, and he would have passed from the sight of his disciples at the rate of more than a thousand miles per hour.

It may be said that his body was "spiritual." Then what became of the body that died? Just before his ascension we are told that he partook of broiled fish with his disciples. Was the fish "spiritual?"

Who saw this miracle?

They say the disciples saw it. Let us see what they say. Matthew did not think it was worth mentioning. He does not speak of it. On the contrary, he says that the last words of Christ were:

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Is it possible that Matthew saw this, the most miraculous of miracles, and yet forgot to put it in his life of Christ? Think of the little miracles recorded by this saint, and then determine whether it is probable that he witnessed the ascension of Jesus Christ.

Mark says: "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." This is all he says about the most wonderful vision that ever astonished human eyes, a miracle great enough to have stuffed credulity to bursting; and yet all we have is this one, poor, meagre verse. We know now that most of the last chapter of Mark is an interpolation, and as a matter of fact, the author of Mark's gospel said nothing about the ascension one way or the other.

Luke says: "And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and was carried up into Heaven."

John does not mention it. He gives as Christ's last words this address to Peter: "Follow thou Me." Of course, he did not say that as he ascended. It seems to have made very little impression upon him; he writes the account as though tired of the

story. He concludes with an impatient wave of the hand.

In the Acts we have another account. A conversation is given not spoken of in any of the others, and we find there two men clad in white apparel, who said: "Ye men of Galilee why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus that was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go up into heaven."

Matthew did not see the men in white apparel, did not see the ascension. Mark forgot the entire transaction, and Luke did not think the men in white apparel worth mentioning. John had not confidence enough in the story to repeat it. And yet, upon such evidence, we are bound to believe in the bodily ascension, or suffer eternal pain.

And here let me ask, why was not the ascension in public?

Casting out Devils.

Most of the miracles said to have been wrought by Christ were recorded to show his power over evil spirits. On many occasions, he is said to have "cast out devils"—devils who could speak, and devils who were dumb.

For many years belief in the existence of evil spirits has been fading from the mind, and as this

belief grew thin, ministers endeavored to give new meanings to the ancient words. They are inclined now to put "disease" in the place of "devils," and most of them say, that the poor wretches supposed to have been the homes of fiends were simply suffering from epileptic fits! We must remember that Christ and these devils often conversed together. Is it possible that fits can talk? These devils often admitted that Christ was God. Can epilepsy certify to divinity? On one occasion the fits told their name, and made a contract to leave the body of a man provided they would be permitted to take possession of a herd of swine. Is it possible that fits carried Christ himself to the pinnacle of a temple? Did fits pretend to be the owner of the whole earth? Is Christ to be praised for resisting such a temptation? Is it conceivable that fits wanted Christ to fall down and worship them?

The church must not abandon its belief in devils. Orthodoxy cannot afford to put out the fires of hell. Throw away a belief in the devil, and most of the miracles of the New Testament become impossible, even if we admit the supernatural. If there is no devil, who was the original tempter in the garden of Eden? If there is no hell, from what are we saved;

to what purpose is the atonement? Upon the obverse of the Christian shield is God, upon the reverse, the devil. No devil, no hell. No hell, no atonement. No atonement, no preaching, no gospel.

Necessity of Belief.

Does belief depend upon evidence? I think it does somewhat in some cases. How is it when a jury is sworn to try a case, hearing all the evidence, hearing both sides, hearing the charge of the judge, hearing the law, are upon their oaths equally divided, six for the plaintiff and six for the defendant? Evidence does not have the same effect upon all people. Why? Our brains are not alike. They are not the same shape. We have not the same intelligence, or the same experience, the same sense. And yet I am held accountable for my belief. I must believe in the Trinity—three times one is one, once one is three, and my soul is to be eternally damned for failing to guess an arithmetical conundrum. That is the poison part of Christianity—that salvation depends upon belief. That is the accursed part, and until that dogma is discarded Christianity will be nothing but superstition.

No man can control his belief. If I hear certain evidence I will believe a certain thing. If I fail to hear it I may never believe it. If it is adapted to

my mind I may accept it; if it is not, I reject it. And what am I to go by? My brain. That is the only light I have from Nature, and if there be a God it is the only torch that this God has given me to find my way through the darkness and night called life. I do not depend upon hearsay for that. I do not have to take the word of any other man nor get upon my knees before a book. Here in the temple of the mind I consult the God, that is to say my reason, and the oracle speaks to me and I obey the oracle. What should I obey? Another man's oracle? Shall I take another man's word—not what he thinks, but what he says some God has said to him?

I would not know a god if I should see one. I have said before, and I say again, the brain thinks in spite of me, and I am not responsible for my thoughts. I cannot control the beating of my heart. I cannot stop the blood that flows through the rivers of my veins. And yet I am held responsible for my belief. Then why does not God give me the evidence? They say he has. In what? In an inspired book. But I do not understand it as they do. Must I be false to my understanding? They say: "When you come to die you will be sorry if you do not." Will I be sorry when I come to die that I did not

live a hypocrite? Will I be sorry that I did not say I was a Christian when I was not? Will the fact that I was honest put a thorn in the pillow of death? Cannot God forgive me for being honest? They say that when he was in Jerusalem he forgave his murderers, but now he will not forgive an honest man for differing from him on the subject of the Trinity.

They say that God says to me, "Forgive your enemies." I say, "I do;" but he says, "I will damn mine." God should be consistent. If he wants me to forgive my enemies he should forgive his. I am asked to forgive enemies who can hurt me. God is only asked to forgive enemies who cannot hurt him. He certainly ought to be as generous as he asks us to be. And I want no God to forgive me unless I am willing to forgive others, and unless I do forgive others. All I ask, if that be true, is that this God should act according to his own doctrine. If I am to forgive my enemies, I ask him to forgive his. I do not believe in the religion of faith, but of kindness, of good deeds. The idea that man is responsible for his belief is at the bottom of religious intolerance and persecution.

How inconsistent these Christians are! In St. Louis the other day I read an interview with a

Christian minister—one who is now holding a revival. They call him the boy preacher—a name that he has borne for fifty or sixty years. The question was whether in these revivals, when they were trying to rescue souls from eternal torture, they would allow colored people to occupy seats with white people; and that revivalist, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, said he would not allow the colored people to sit with white people; they must go to the back of the church. These same Christians tell us that in heaven there will be no distinction. That Christ cares nothing for the color of the skin. That in Paradise white and black will sit together, swap harps, and cry hallelujah in chorus; yet this minister, believing as he says he does, that all men who fail to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will eternally perish, was not willing that a colored man should sit by a white man and hear the gospel of everlasting peace.

According to this revivalist, the ship of the world is going down; Christ is the only life-boat; and yet he is not willing that a colored man, with a soul to save, shall sit by the side of a white brother, and be rescued from eternal death. He admits that the white brother is totally depraved; that if the white brother had justice done him he would be damned;

that it is only through the wonderful mercy of God that the white man is not in hell; and yet such a being, totally depraved, is too good to sit by a colored man! Total depravity becomes arrogant; total depravity draws the color line in religion, and an ambassador of Christ says to the black man, "Stand away; let your white brother hear first about the love of God."

I believe in the religion of humanity. It is far better to love our fellow-men than to love God. We can help them. We cannot help him. We had better do what we can than to be always pretending to do what we cannot.

Virtue is of no color; kindness, justice and love, of no complexion.

Eternal Punishment.

Now I come to the last part of this creed—the doctrine of eternal punishment. I have concluded that I will never deliver a lecture in which I will not attack the doctrine of eternal pain. That part of the Congregational creed would disgrace the lowest savage that crouches and crawls in the jungles of Africa. The man who now, in the nineteenth century, preaches the doctrine of eternal punishment, the doctrine of an eternal hell, has lived in vain. Think of that doctrine! The eternity of punishment! I

find in this same creed—in this latest utterance of Congregationalism—that Christ is finally going to triumph in this world and establish his kingdom. This creed declares that "we believe in the ultimate prevalence of the kingdom of God over all the earth." If their doctrine is true he will never triumph in the other world. The Congregational Church does not believe in the ultimate prevalence of the kingdom of Christ in the world to come. There he is to meet with eternal failure. He will have billions in hell forever.

In this world we never will be perfectly civilized as long as a gallows casts its shadow upon the earth. As long as there is a penitentiary, within the walls of which a human being is immured, we are not a perfectly civilized people. We shall never be perfectly civilized until we do away with crime. And yet, according to this Christian religion, God is to have an eternal penitentiary; he is to be an everlasting jailer, an everlasting turnkey, a warden of an infinite dungeon, and he is going to keep prisoners there forever, not for the purpose of reforming them—because they are never going to get any better, only worse—but for the purpose of purposeless punishment. And for what? For something they failed to believe in this world. Born in ignorance, sup-

ported by poverty, caught in the snares of temptation, deformed by toil, stupefied by want—and yet held responsible through the countless ages of eternity! No man can think of a greater horror; no man can dream of a greater absurdity. For the growth of that doctrine ignorance was soil and fear was rain. It came from the fanged mouths of serpents, and yet it is called "glad tidings of great joy."

Some Who are Damned.

We are told "God so loved the world" that he is going to damn almost everybody. If this orthodox religion be true, some of the greatest, and grandest, and best who ever lived are suffering God's torments to-night. It does not appear to make much difference with the members of the church. They go right on enjoying themselves about as well as ever. If this doctrine is true, Benjamin Franklin, one of the wisest and best of men, who did so much to give us here a free government, is suffering the tyranny of God to-night, although he endeavored to establish freedom among men. If the churches were honest, their preachers would tell their hearers: "Benjamin Franklin is in hell, and we warn all the youth not to imitate Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, with its self-evident truths, has been damned these many years."

That is what all the ministers ought to have the courage to say. Talk as you believe. Stand by your creed, or change it. I want to impress it upon your minds, because the thing I wish to do in this world is to put out the fires of hell. I will keep on as long as there is one little red coal left in the bottomless pit. As long as the ashes are warm I shall denounce this infamous doctrine.

I want you to know that according to this creed the men who founded this great and splendid Government are in hell to-night. Most of the men who fought in the Revolutionary war, and wrested from the clutch of Great Britain this continent, have been rewarded by the eternal wrath of God. Thousands of the old Revolutionary soldiers are in torment to-night. Let the preachers have the courage to say so. The men who fought in 1812, and gave to the United States the freedom of the seas, have nearly all been damned. Thousands of heroes who served our country in the Civil war, hundreds who starved in prisons, are now in the dungeons of God, compared with which, Andersonville was Paradise. The greatest of heroes are there ; the greatest of poets, the greatest scientists, the men who have made the world beautiful—they are all among the damned if this creed is true.

Humboldt, who shed light, and who added to the intellectual wealth of mankind; Goethe, and Schiller, and Lessing, who almost created the German language—all gone—all suffering the wrath of God to-night, and every time an angel thinks of one of those men he gives his harp an extra twang. Laplace, who read the heavens like an open book—he is there. Robert Burns, the poet of human love—he is there. He wrote the "Prayer of Holy Willie." He fastened on the cross the Presbyterian creed, and there it is, a lingering crucifixion. Robert Burns increased the tenderness of the human heart. Dickens put a shield of pity before the flesh of childhood—God is getting even with him. Our own Ralph Waldo Emerson, although he had a thousand opportunities to hear Methodist clergymen, scorned the means of grace, lived to his highest ideal, gave to his fellow-men his best and truest thought, and yet his spirit is the sport and prey of fiends to-night.

Longfellow, who has refined thousands of homes, did not believe in the miraculous origin of the Savior, doubted the report of Gabriel, loved his fellow-men, did what he could to free the slaves, to increase the happiness of man, yet God was waiting for his soul—waiting to cast him out and down forever. Thomas Paine, author of the "Rights of Man;" offering his

life in both hemispheres for the freedom of the human race; one of the founders of this Republic, is now among the damned; and yet it seems to me that if he could only get God's attention long enough to point him to the American flag he would let him out. Auguste Comte, author of the "Positive Philosophy," who loved his fellow-men to that degree that he made of humanity a god, who wrote his great work in poverty, with his face covered with tears—they are getting their revenge on him now.

Voltaire, who abolished torture in France; who did more for human liberty than any other man, living or dead; who was the assassin of superstition, and whose dagger still rusts in the heart of Catholicism—he is with the rest. All the priests who have been translated have had their happiness increased by looking at Voltaire.

Giordano Bruno, the first star of the morning after the long night; Benedict Spinoza, the pantheist, the metaphysician, the pure and generous man; Diderot, the encyclopedist, who endeavored to get all knowledge in a small compass, so that he could put the peasant on an equality intellectually with the prince; Diderot, who wished to sow all over the world the seed of knowledge, and loved to labor for mankind, while the priests wanted to burn; who did all he

could to put out the fires—he was lost, long, long ago. His cry for water has become so common that his voice is now recognized through all the realms of heaven, and the angels laughing, say to one another, "That is Diderot."

David Hume, the Scotch philosopher, is there, with his inquiry about the "Human Understanding" and his argument against miracles. Beethoven, master of music, and Wagner, the Shakespeare of harmony, who made the air of this world rich forever, they are there; and to-night they have better music in hell than in heaven!

Shelley, whose soul, like his own "Skylark," was a winged joy, has been damned for many, many years; and Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race, who did more to elevate mankind than all the priests who ever lived and died, he is there; but founders of inquisitions, builders of dungeons, makers of chains, inventors of instruments of torture, tearers, and burners, and branders of human flesh, stealers of babes, and sellers of husbands and wives and children, and they who kept the horizon lurid with the fagot's flame for a thousand years—are in heaven to-night. I wish heaven joy!

That is the doctrine with which we are polluting the souls of children. That is the doctrine that puts

a fiend by the dying bed and a prophecy of hell over every cradle. That is "glad tidings of great joy."

Only a little while ago, when the great flood came upon the Ohio, sent by him who is ruling the world and paying particular attention to the affairs of nations, just in the gray of the morning they saw a house floating down and on its top a human being. A few men went out to the rescue. They found there a woman, a mother, and they wished to save her life. She said: "No, I am going to stay where I am. In this house I have three dead babes; I will not desert them." Think of a love so limitless —stronger and deeper than despair and death! And yet, the Christian religion says, that if that woman, that mother, did not happen to believe in their creed God would send her soul to eternal fire! If there is another world, and if in heaven they wear hats, when such a woman climbs the opposite bank of the Jordan, Christ should lift his to her.

The doctrine of eternal pain is my trouble with this Christian religion. I reject it on account of its infinite heartlessness. I cannot tell them too often, that during our last war Christians, who knew that if they were shot they would go right to heaven, went and hired wicked men to take their places, perfectly willing that these men should go to hell

provided they could stay at home. You see they are not honest in it, or they do not believe it, or as the people say, "they don't sense it." They have not imagination enough to conceive what it is they believe, and what a terrific falsehood they assert. And I beg of every one who hears me to-night, I beg, I implore, I beseech you, never to give another dollar to build a church in which that lie is preached. Never give another cent to send a missionary with his mouth stuffed with that falsehood to a foreign land. Why, they say, the heathen will go to heaven, any way, if you let them alone. What is the use of sending them to hell by enlightening them? Let them alone. The idea of going and telling a man a thing that if he does not believe, he will be damned, when the chances are ten to one that he will not believe it, is monstrous. Do not tell him here, and as quick as he gets to the other world and finds it is necessary to believe, he can say "Yes." Give him a chance.

Another Objection.

My objection to orthodox religion is that it destroys human love, and tells us that the love of this world is not necessary to make a heaven in the next.

No matter about your wife, your children, your brother, your sister—no matter about all the affec-

tions of the human heart—when you get there, you will be with the angels. I do not know whether I would like the angels. I do not know whether the angels would like me. I would rather stand by the ones who have loved me and whom I know; and I can conceive of no heaven without the loved of this earth. That is the trouble with this Christian religion. Leave your father, leave your mother, leave your wife, leave your children, leave everything and follow Jesus Christ. I will not. I will stay with my people. I will not sacrifice on the altar of a selfish fear all the grandest and noblest promptings of my heart.

Do away with human love and what are we? What would we be in another world, and what would we be here? Can any one conceive of music without human love? Of art, or joy? Human love builds every home. Human love is the author of all beauty. Love paints every picture, and chisels every statue. Love builds every fireside. What could heaven be without human love? And yet that is what we are promised—a heaven with your wife lost, your mother lost, some of your children gone. And you expect to be made happy by falling in with some angel! Such a religion is infamous. Christianity holds human love for naught; and yet

Love is the only bow on Life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the babe, and sheds its radiance on the quiet tomb. It is the mother of art, inspirer of poet, patriot and philosopher. It is the air and light of every heart—builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody—for music is the voice of love. Love is the magician, the enchanter, that changes worthless things to joy, and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower, the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts; but with it, earth is heaven, and we are gods.

And how are you to get to this heaven? On the efforts of another. You are to be a perpetual heavenly pauper, and you will have to admit through all eternity that you never would have been there if you had not been frightened. "I am here," you will say, "I have these wings, I have this musical instrument, because I was scared. I am here. The ones who loved me are among the damned; the ones I loved are also there—but I am here, that is enough."

What a glorious world heaven must be! No reformation in that world—not the slightest. If you

die in Arkansas that is the end of you! Think of telling a boy in the next world, who lived and died in Delaware, that he had been fairly treated! Can anything be more infamous?

All on an equality—the rich and the poor, those with parents loving them, those with every opportunity for education, on an equality with the poor, the abject and the ignorant—and this little day called life, this moment with a hope, a shadow and a tear, this little space between your mother's arms and the grave, balances eternity.

God can do nothing for you when you get there. A Methodist preacher can do more for the soul here than its creator can there. The soul goes to heaven, where there is nothing but good society; no bad examples; and they are all there, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and yet they can do nothing for that poor unfortunate except to damn him. Is there any sense in that?

Why should this be a period of probation? It says in the Bible, I believe, "Now is the accepted time." When does that mean? That means whenever the passage is pronounced. "Now is the accepted time." It will be the same to-morrow, will it not? And just as appropriate then as to-day, and if appropriate at any time, appropriate through all eternity.

What I say is this: There is no world—there can be no world—in which every human being will not have the eternal opportunity of doing right.

That is my objection to this Christian religion; and if the love of earth is not the love of heaven, if those we love here are to be separated from us there, then I want eternal sleep. Give me a good cool grave rather than the furnace of Jehovah's wrath. I pray the angel of the resurrection to let me sleep. Gabriel, do not blow! Let me alone! If, when the grave bursts, I am not to meet the faces that have been my sunshine in this life, let me sleep. Rather than that this doctrine of endless punishment should be true, I would gladly see the fabric of our civilization crumbling fall to unmeaning chaos and to formless dust, where oblivion broods and even memory forgets. I would rather that the blind Samson of some imprisoned force, released by chance, should so wreck and strand the mighty world that man in stress and strain of want and fear should shudderingly crawl back to savage and barbaric night. I would rather that every planet should in its orbit wheel a barren star!

What I Believe.

I think it is better to love your children than to love God, a thousand times better, because you can

help them, and I am inclined to think that God can get along without you. Certainly we cannot help a being without body, parts, or passions!

I believe in the religion of the family. I believe that the roof-tree is sacred, from the smallest fibre that feels the soft cool clasp of earth, to the topmost flower that spreads its bosom to the sun, and like a spendthrift gives its perfume to the air. The home where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire—the fairest flower in all the world. And I tell you God cannot afford to damn a man in the next world who has made a happy family in this. God cannot afford to cast over the battlements of heaven the man who has a happy home upon this earth. God cannot afford to be unpitying to a human heart capable of pity. God cannot clothe with fire the man who has clothed the naked here; and God cannot send to eternal pain a man who has done something toward improving the condition of his fellow-man. If he can, I had rather go to hell than to heaven and keep the company of such a god.

Immortality.

They tell me that the next terrible thing I do is to take away the hope of immortality! I do not, I would not, I could not. Immortality was first dreamed of by human love; and yet the church is going to

take human love out of immortality. We love, therefore we wish to live. A loved one dies and we wish to meet again; and from the affection of the human heart grew the great oak of the hope of immortality. Around that oak has climbed the poisonous vines of superstition. Theologians, pretenders, soothsayers, parsons, priests, popes, bishops, have taken advantage of that. They have stood by graves and promised heaven. They have stood by graves and prophesied a future filled with pain. They have erected their toll-gates on the highway of life and have collected money from fear.

Neither the Bible nor the church gave us the idea of immortality. The Old Testament tells us how we lost immortality, and it does not say a word about another world, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse in Malachi. There is not in the Old Testament a burial service.

No man in the Old Testament stands by the dead and says, "We shall meet again." From the top of Sinai came no hope of another world.

And when we get to the New Testament, what do we find? "They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead." As though some would be counted unworthy to obtain the resurrection of the dead. And in another

place. "Seek for honor, glory, immortality." If you have it, why seek it? And in another place, "God, who alone hath immortality." Yet they tell us that we get our idea of immortality from the Bible. I deny it.

I would not destroy the faintest ray of human hope, but I deny that we got our idea of immortality from the Bible. It existed long before Moses. We find it symbolized through all Egypt, through all India. Wherever man has lived he has made another world in which to meet the lost of this.

The history of this belief we find in tombs and temples wrought and carved by those who wept and hoped. Above their dead they laid the symbols of another life.

We do not know. We do not prophesy a life of pain. We leave the dead with Nature, the mother of us all. Under the bow of hope, under the seven-hued arch, let the dead sleep.

If Christ was in fact God, why did he not plainly say there is another life? Why did he not tell us something about it? Why did he not turn the tear-stained hope of immortality into the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he go dumbly to his death and leave the world in darkness and in doubt? Why? Because he was a man and did not know.

What consolation has the orthodox religion for the widow of the unbeliever, the widow of a good, brave, kind man? What can the orthodox minister say to relieve the bursting heart of that woman? What can he say to relieve the aching hearts of the orphans as they kneel by the grave of that father, if that father did not happen to be an orthodox Christian? What consolation have they? When a Christian loses a friend the tears spring from his eyes as quickly as from the eyes of others. Their tears are as bitter as ours. Why? The echoes of the words spoken eighteen hundred years ago are so low, and the sounds of the clods upon the coffin are so loud; the promises are so far away, and the dead are so near.

We do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door; the beginning or end of a day; the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings; the rise or the set of a sun, or an endless life that brings the rapture of love to every one.

A Fable.

There is the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice. Eurydice had been captured and taken to the infernal regions, and Orpheus went after her, taking with him his harp and playing as he went. When he came to Pluto's realm he began to play, and Sysiphus,

charmed by the music, sat down upon the stone that he had been heaving up the mountain's side for so many years, and which continually rolled back upon him; Ixion paused upon his wheel of fire; Tantalus ceased his vain efforts for water; the daughters of the Danaides left off trying to fill their sieves with water; Pluto smiled, and for the first time in the history of hell the cheeks of the Furies were wet with tears. The god relented, and said, "Eurydice may go with you, but you must not look back." So Orpheus again threaded the caverns, playing as he went, and as he reached the light he failed to hear the footsteps of Eurydice. He looked back, and in a moment she was gone. Again and again Orpheus sought his love. Again and again looked back.

This fable gives the idea of the perpetual effort made by the human mind to rescue truth from the clutch of error.

Some time Orpheus will not look back. Some day Eurydice will reach the blessed light, and at last there will fade from the memory of men the monsters of superstition.

MYTH AND MIRACLE.

MYTH AND MIRACLE.

I.

HAPPINESS is the true end and aim of life. It is the task of intelligence to ascertain the conditions of happiness, and when found the truly wise will live in accordance with them. By happiness is meant not simply the joy of eating and drinking—the gratification of the appetite—but good, well-being, in the highest and noblest forms. The joy that springs from obligation discharged, from duty done, from generous acts, from being true to the ideal, from a perception of the beautiful in nature, art and conduct. The happiness that is born of and gives birth to poetry and music, that follows the gratification of the highest wants.

Happiness is the result of all that is really right and sane.

But there are many people who regard the desire to be happy as a very low and degrading ambition. These people call themselves spiritual. They pretend to care nothing for the pleasures of "sense." They hold this world, this life, in contempt. They do not want happiness in this world — but in another. Here, happiness degrades—there, it purifies and ennobles.

These spiritual people have been known as prophets, apostles, augurs, hermits, monks, priests, popes, bishops and parsons. They are devout and useless. They do not cultivate the soil. They produce nothing. They live on the labor of others. They are pious and parasitic. They pray for others, if the others will work for them. They claim to have been selected by the Infinite to instruct and govern mankind. They are "meek" and arrogant, "long-suffering" and revengeful.

They ever have been, now are, and always will be the enemies of liberty, of investigation and science. They are believers in the supernatural, the miraculous and the absurd. They have filled the world with hatred, bigotry and fear. In defence of their creeds they have committed every crime and practiced every cruelty.

They denounce as worldly and sensual those who are gross enough to love wives and children, to build homes, to fell the forests, to navigate the seas, to cultivate the earth, to chisel statues, to paint pictures and fill the world with love and art.

They have denounced and maligned the thinkers, the poets, the dramatists, the composers, the actors, the orators, the workers — those who have conquered the world for man.

According to them this world is only the vestibule of the next, a kind of school, an ordeal, a place of probation. They have always insisted that this life should be spent in preparing for the next; that those who supported and obeyed the "spiritual guides"—the shepherds, would be rewarded with an eternity of joy, and that all others would suffer eternal pain.

These spiritual people have always hated labor. They have added nothing to the wealth of the world. They have always lived on alms — on the labor ot others. They have always been the enemies of innocent pleasure, and of human love.

These spiritual people have produced a literature. The books they have written are called sacred. Our

sacred books are called the Bible. The Hindoos have the Vedas and many others, the Persians the Zend Avesta—the Egyptians had the Book of the Dead—the Aztecs the Popol Vuh, and the Mohammedans have the Koran.

These books, for the most part, treat of the unknowable. They describe gods and winged phantoms of the air. They give accounts of the origin of the universe, the creation of man and the worlds beyond this. They contain nothing of value. Millions and millions of people have wasted their lives studying these absurd and ignorant books.

The "spiritual people" in each country claimed that their books had been written by inspired men — that God was the real author, and that all men and women who denied this would be, after death, tormented forever.

And yet, the worldly people, the uninspired, the wicked, have produced a far greater literature than the spiritual and the inspired.

Not all the sacred books of the world equal Shakespeare's "volume of the brain." A purer philosophy, grander, nobler, fell from the lips of Shakespeare's clowns than the Old Testament or the New, contains.

The Declaration of Independence is nobler far than all the utterances from Sinai's cloud and flame. "A Man's a Man for a' That," by Robert Burns, is better than anything the sacred books contain. For my part, I would rather hear Beethoven's Sixth Symphony than to read the five books of Moses. Give me the Sixth Symphony—this sound-wrought picture of the fields and woods, of flowering hedge and happy home, where thrushes build and swallows fly, and mothers sing to babes; this echo of the babbled lullaby of brooks that, dallying, wind and fall where meadows bare their daisied bosoms to the sun; this joyous mimicry of summer rain, the laugh of children, and the rhythmic rustle of the whispering leaves; this strophe of peasant life; this perfect poem of content and love.

I would rather listen to Tristan and Isolde — that Mississippi of melody — where the great notes, winged like eagles, lift the soul above the cares and griefs of this weary world — than to all the orthodox sermons ever preached. I would rather look at the Venus de Milo than to read the Presbyterian creed.

The spiritual have endeavored to civilize the world through fear and faith — by the promise of reward

and the threat of pain in other worlds. They taught men to hate and persecute their fellow-men. In all ages they have appealed to force. During all the years they have practiced fraud. They have pretended to have influence with the gods — that their prayers gave rain, sunshine and harvest — that their curses brought pestilence and famine, and that their blessings filled the world with plenty. They have subsisted on the fears their falsehoods created. Like poisonous vines, they have lived on the oak of labor. They have praised charity, but they never gave. They have denounced revenge, but they never forgave.

Whenever the spiritual have had power, art has died, learning has languished, science has been despised, liberty destroyed, the thinkers have been imprisoned, the intelligent and honest have been outcasts, and the brave have been murdered.

The "spiritual" have been, are, and always will be the enemies of the human race.

For all the blessings that we now enjoy — for progress in every form, for science and art — for all that has lengthened life, that has conquered disease, that has lessened pain, for raiment, roof and food, for music in its highest forms — for the poetry that

has ennobled and enriched our lives — for the marvellous machines now working for the world — for all this we are indebted to the worldly — to those who turned their attention to the affairs of this life. They have been the only benefactors of our race.

II.

AND yet all of these religions — these "sacred books," these priests, have been naturally produced. From the dens and caves of savagery to the palaces of civilization men have traveled by the necessary paths and roads. Back of every step has been the efficient cause. In the history of the world there has been no chance, no interference from without, nothing miraculous. Everything in accordance with and produced by the facts in nature.

We need not blame the hypocritical and cruel. They thought and acted as they were compelled to think and act.

In all ages man has tried to account for himself and his surroundings. He did the best he could. He wondered why the water ran, why the trees grew, why the clouds floated, why the stars shone, why the sun and moon journeyed through the heavens. He was troubled about life and death, about darkness and dreams. The seas, the volcanoes, the lightning and thunder, the earthquake and cyclone, filled him with fear. Behind all life and

growth and motion, and even inanimate things, he placed a spirit — an intelligent being — a fetich, a person, something like himself — a god, controlled by love and hate. To him causes and effects became gods — supernatural beings. The Dawn was a maiden, wondrously fair, the Sun, a warrior and lover; the Night, a serpent, a wolf — the Wind, a musician; Winter, a wild beast; Autumn, Proserpine gathering flowers.

Poets were the makers of these myths. They were the first to account for what they saw and felt. The great multitude mistook these fancies for facts. Myths strangely alike, were produced by most nations, and gradually took possession of the world.

The Sleeping Beauty, a myth of the year, has been found among most peoples. In this myth, the Earth was a maiden — the Sun was her lover. She had fallen asleep in winter. Her blood was still and her breath had gone. In the Spring the lover came, clasped her in his arms, covered her lips and cheeks with kisses. She was thrilled, her heart began to beat, she breathed, her blood flowed, and she awoke to love and joy. This myth has made the circuit of the globe.

So, Red Riding-Hood is the history of a day. Little Red Riding-Hood — the morning, touched with red, goes to visit her kindred, a day that is past. She is attacked by the wolf of night and is rescued by the hunter, Apollo, who pierces the heart of the beast with an arrow of light.

The beautiful myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is the story of the year. Eurydice has been captured and carried to the infernal world. Orpheus, playing upon his harp, goes after her. Such is the effect of his music when he reaches the realm of Pluto, the laughterless, that Tantalus ceases his efforts to slake his thirst. He listens and forgets his withered lips, the daughters of the Danaides cease their vain efforts to fill the sieve with water, Sisyphus sits down on the stone that he so often had heaved against the mountain's misty side, Ixion pauses upon his wheel of fire, even Pluto smiles, and for the first time in the history of hell the cheeks of the Furies are wet with tears.

"Give me back Eurydice," cried Orpheus, and Pluto said: "Take her, but look not back." Orpheus led the way and Eurydice followed. Just as he reached the upper world, he missed her footsteps, turned, looked, and she vanished.

And thus the summer comes, is lost, and comes again through all the years.

So, our ancestors believed in the Garden of Eden, in the Golden Age, in the blessed time when all were good and pure — when nature satisfied the wants of all. The race, like the old man, has golden dreams of youth. The morning was filled with light and life and joy, and the evening is always sad. When the old man was young, girls were beautiful and men were honest. He remembers his Eden. And so the whole world has had its age of gold.

Our fathers were believers in the Elysian Fields. They were in the far, far West. They saw them at the setting of the sun. They saw the floating isles of gold in sapphire seas; the templed mist with spires and domes of emerald and amethyst; the magic caverns of the clouds, resplendent with the rays of every gem. And as they looked, they thought the curtain had been drawn aside and that their eyes had for a moment feasted on the glories of another world.

The myth of the Flood has also been universal. Finding shells of the seas on plain and mountain, and everywhere some traces of the waves, they thought the world had been submerged — that God

in wrath had drowned the race, except a few his mercy saved.

The Hindus say that Menu, a holy man, dipped from the Ganges some water, and in the basin saw a little fish. The fish begged him to throw him back into the river, and Menu, having pity, cast him back. The fish then told Menu that there was to be a flood — told him to build an ark, to take on board, people, animals and food, and that when the flood came, he, the fish, would save him. The saint did as he was told, the flood came, the fish returned. By that time he had grown to be a whale with a horn in his head. About this horn Menu fastened a rope, attached the other end to the ark, and the fish towed the boat across the raging waves to a mountain's top, where it rested until the waters subsided. The name of this wonderful fish was Matsaya.

Many other nations told similar stories of floods and arks and the sending forth of doves.

In all these myths and legends of the past we find philosophies and dreams and efforts, stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mysteries of life and death, to answer the questions of the whence and whither, and who vainly sought with bits of shattered glass to make a mirror

that would in very truth reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self. These myths were born of hopes and fears, of tears and smiles, and they were touched and colored by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth and death's sad night. They clothed even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them the winds and waves were music, and all the springs, the mountains, woods and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy forms. They thrilled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire, made tawny Summer's billowy breast the throne and home of love, filled Autumn's arms with sun-kissed grapes and gathered sheaves, and pictured Winter as a weak old king, who felt, like Lear, upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears.

These myths, though false in fact, are beautiful and true in thought, and have for many ages and in countless ways enriched the heart and kindled thought.

III.

IN all probability the first religion was Sun-worship. Nothing could have been more natural. Light was life and warmth and love. The sun was the fireside of the world. The sun was the "all-seeing"—the "Sky Father." Darkness was grief and death, and in the shadows crawled the serpents of despair and fear.

The sun was a great warrior, fighting the hosts of Night. Apollo was the sun, and he fought and conquered the serpent of Night. Agni, the generous, who loved the lowliest and visited the humblest, was the sun. He was the god of fire, and the crossed sticks that by friction leaped into flame were his emblem. It was said that, in spite of his goodness, he devoured his father and mother, the two pieces of wood being his parents. Baldur was the sun. He was in love with the Dawn—a maiden—he deserted her and traveled through the heavens alone. At the twilight they met, were reconciled, and the drops of dew were the tears of joy they shed.

Chrishna was the sun. At his birth the Ganges thrilled from its source to the sea. All the trees, the dead as well as the living, burst into leaf and bud and flower.

Hercules was a sun-god.

Jonah the same, rescued from the fiends of Night and carried by the fish through the under world. Samson was a sun-god. His strength was in his hair — in his beams. He was shorn of his strength by Delilah, the shadow — the darkness. So, Osiris, Bacchus, Mithra, Hermes, Buddha, Quelzalcoatle, Prometheus, Zoroaster, Perseus, Codom Lao-tsze Fo-hi, Horus and Rameses were all sun-gods.

All these gods had gods for fathers and all their mothers were virgins.

The births of nearly all were announced by stars.

When they were born there was celestial music— voices declared that a blessing had come upon the earth.

When Buddha was born, the celestial choir sang: "This day is born for the good of men Buddha, and to dispel the darkness of their ignorance — to give joy and peace to the world."

Chrishna was born in a cave, and protected by shepherds. Bacchus, Apollo, Mithra and Hermes

were all born in caves. Buddha was born in an inn — according to some, under a tree.

Tyrants sought to kill all of these gods when they were babes.

When Chrishna was born, a tyrant killed the babes of the neighborhood.

Buddha was the child of Maya, a virgin, in the kingdom of Madura. The king arrested Maya before the child was born, imprisoned her in a tower. During the night when the child was born, a great wind wrecked the tower, and carried mother and child to a place of safety. The next morning the king sent his soldiers to kill the babes, and when they came to Buddha and his mother, the babe appeared to be about twelve years of age, and the soldiers passed on.

So Typhon sought in many ways to destroy the babe Horus. The king pursued the infant Zoroaster. Cadmus tried to kill the infant Bacchus.

All of these gods were born on the 25th of December.

Nearly all were worshiped by "wise men."

All of them fasted for forty days.

All met with a violent death.

All rose from the dead.

The history of these gods is the history of our Christ. He had a god for a father, a virgin for a mother. He was born in a manger, or a cave — on the 25th of December. His birth was announced by angels. He was worshiped by wise men, guided by a star. Herod, seeking his life, caused the death of many babes. Christ fasted for forty days. So, it rained for forty days before the flood—Moses was on Mt. Sinai for forty days. The temple had forty pillars and the Jews wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Christ met with a violent death, and rose from the dead.

These things are not accidents—not coincidences. Christ was a sun-god. All religions have been born of sun-worship. To-day, when priests pray, they shut their eyes. This is a survival of sun-worship. When men worshiped the sun, they had to shut their eyes. Afterwards, to flatter idols, they pretended that the glory of their faces was more than the eyes could bear.

In the religion of our day there is nothing original. All of its doctrines, its symbols and ceremonies are but the survivals of creeds that perished long ago. Baptism is far older than Christianity — than Judaism. The Hindus, the Egyptians, the

Greeks and Romans had holy water. The eucharist was borrowed from the Pagans. Ceres was the goddess of the fields, Bacchus the god of the vine. At the harvest festival they made cakes of wheat and said: "These are the flesh of the goddess." They drank wine and cried: "This is the blood of our god."

The cross has been a symbol for many thousands of years. It was a symbol of immortality — of life, of the god Agni, the form of the grave of a man. An ancient people of Italy, who lived long before the Romans, long before the Etruscans, so long that not one word of their language is known, used the cross, and beneath that emblem, carved on stone, their dead still rest. In the forests of Central America, ruined temples have been found, and on the walls the cross with the bleeding victim. On Babylonian cylinders is the impression of the cross. The Trinity came from Egypt. Osiris, Isis and Horus were worshiped thousands of years before our Father, Son and Holy Ghost were thought of. So the Tree of Life grew in India, China and among the Aztecs long before the Garden of Eden was planted. Long before our Bible was known, other nations had their sacred books, temples and altars,

sacrifices, ceremonies and priests. The "Fall of Man" is far older than our religion, and so are the "Atonement" and the Scheme of Redemption.

In our blessed religion there is nothing new, nothing original.

Among the Egyptians the cross was a symbol of the life to come. And yet the first religion was, and all religions growing out of that, were naturally produced. Every brain was a field in which Nature sowed the seeds of thought. The rise and set of sun, the birth and death of day, the dawns of silver and the dusks of gold, the wonders of the rain and snow, the shroud of Winter and the many colored robe of Spring, the lonely moon with nightly loss or gain, the serpent lightning and the thunder's voice, the tempest's fury and the zephyr's sigh, the threat of storm and promise of the bow, cathedral clouds with dome and spire, earthquake and strange eclipse, frost and fire, the snow-crowned mountains with their tongues of flame, the fields of space sown thick with stars, the wandering comets hurrying past the fixed and sleepless sentinels of night, the marvels of the earth and air, the perfumed flower, the painted wing, the waveless pool that held within its magic breast the image of the startled face, the mimic echo

that made a record in the viewless air, the pathless forests and the boundless seas, the ebb and flow of tides — the slow, deep breathing of some vague and monstrous life — the miracle of birth, the mystery of dream and death, and over all the silent and immeasurable dome. These were the warp and woof, and at the loom sat Love and Fancy, Hope and Fear, and wove the wondrous tapestries whereon we find pictures of gods and fairy lands and all the legends that were told when Nature rocked the cradle of the infant world.

IV.

WE must remember that there is a great difference between a myth and a miracle. A myth is the idealization of a fact. A miracle is the counterfeit of a fact. There is the same difference between a myth and a miracle that there is between fiction and falsehood — between poetry and perjury. Miracles belong to the far past and the far future. The little line of sand, called the present, between the seas, belongs to common sense, to the natural.

If you should tell a man that the dead were raised two thousand years ago, he would probably say: "Yes, I know that." If you should say that a hundred thousand years from now all the dead will be raised, he might say: "Probably they will." But if you should tell him that you saw a dead man raised and given life that day, he would likely ask the name of the insane asylum from which you had escaped.

Our Bible is filled with accounts of miracles and yet they always fail to convince.

Jehovah, according to the Scriptures, wrought

hundreds of miracles for the benefit of the Jews. With many miracles he rescued them from slavery, guided them on their journey with a miraculous cloud by day and a miraculous pillar of fire by night — divided the sea that they might escape from the Egyptians, fed them with miraculous manna and supernatural quails, raised up hornets to attack their enemies, caused water to follow them wherever they wandered and in countless ways manifested his power, and yet the Jews cared nothing for these wonders. Not one of them seems to have been convinced that Jehovah had done anything for the people.

In spite of all these miracles, the Jews had more confidence in a golden calf, made by themselves, than in Jehovah. The reason of this is, that the miracles were never performed, and never invented until hundreds of years after those, who had wandered over the desert of Sinai, were dust.

The miracles attributed to Christ had no effect. No human being seems to have been convinced by them. Those whom he raised from the dead, cured of leprosy, or blindness, failed to become his followers. Not one of them appeared at his trial. Not one offered to bear witness of his miraculous power.

To this there is but one explanation: The miracles were never performed. These stories were the growth of centuries. The casting out of devils, the changing of water into wine, feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes, resisting the devil, using a fish for a pocketbook, curing the blind with clay and saliva, stilling the tempest, walking on the water, the resurrection and ascension, happened and only happened, in the imaginations of men, who were not born until several generations after Christ was dead.

In those days the world was filled with ignorance and fear. Miracles happened every day. The supernatural was expected. Gods were continually interfering with the affairs of this world. Everything was told except the truth, everything believed except the facts. History was a circumstantial account of occurrences that never occurred. Devils and goblins and ghosts were as plentiful as saints. The bones of the dead were used to cure the living. Cemeteries were hospitals and corpses were physicians. The saints practiced magic, the pious communed with God in dreams, and the course of events was changed by prayer. The credulous demanded the marvelous, the miraculous, and the priests sup-

plied the demand. The sky was full of signs, omens of death and disaster, and the darkness thick with devils endeavoring to mislead and enslave the souls of men.

Our fathers thought that everything had been made for man, and that demons and gods gave their entire attention to this world. The people believed that they were the sport and prey, the favorites or victims, of these phantoms. And they also believed that the Creator, the God, could be influenced by sacrifice, by prayers and ceremonies.

This has been the mistake of the world. All the temples have been reared, all the altars erected, all the sacrifices offered, all the prayers uttered in vain. No god has interfered, no prayer has been answered, no help received from heaven. Nothing was created, nothing has happened for, or with reference to man. If not a human being lived,— if all were in their graves, the sun would continue to shine, the wheeling world would still pursue its flight, violets would spread their velvet bosoms to the day, the spendthrift roses give their perfume to the air, the climbing vines would hide with leaf and flower the fallen and the dead, the changing seasons would come and go, time would repeat the poem of

the year, storms would wreck and whispering rains repair, Spring with deft and unseen hands would weave her robes of green, life with countless lips would seek fair Summer's swelling breasts, Autumn would reap the wealth of leaf and fruit and seed, Winter, the artist, would etch in frost the pines and ferns, while Wind and Wave and Fire, old architects, with ceaseless toil would still destroy and build, still wreck and change, and from the dust of death produce again the throb and breath of life.

V.

A FEW years ago a few men began to think, to investigate, to reason. They began to doubt the legends of the church, the miracles of the past. They began to notice what happened. They found that eclipses came at certain intervals and that their coming could be foretold. They became satisfied that the conduct of men had nothing to do with eclipses—and that the stars moved in their orbits unconscious of the sons of men. Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler destroyed the astronomy of the Bible, and demonstrated that the "inspired" story of creation could not be true, and that the church was as ignorant as the priests were dishonest.

They found that the myth-makers were mistaken, that the sun and stars did not revolve about the earth, that the firmament was not solid, that the earth was not flat, and that the so-called philosophy of the theologians was absurd and idiotic.

The stars became witnesses against the creeds of superstition.

With the telescope the heavens were explored. The New Jerusalem could not be found.

It had faded away.

The church persecuted the astronomers and denied the facts. In February, in the year of grace sixteen hundred, the Catholic Church, the "Triumphant Beast," having in her hands, her paws, the keys of heaven and hell, accused Giordano Bruno of having declared that there were other worlds than this. He was tried, convicted, imprisoned in a dungeon for seven years. He was offered his liberty if he would recant. Bruno, the atheist, the philosopher, refused to stain his soul by denying what he believed to be true. He was taken from his cell by the priests, by those who loved their enemies, led to the place of execution. He was clad in a robe on which representations of devils had been painted—the devils that were soon to claim his soul. He was chained to a stake and about his body the wood was piled. Then priests, followers of Christ, lighted the fagots and flames consumed the greatest, the most perfect martyr, that ever suffered death.

And yet the Italian agent of God, the infallible Leo XIII., only a few years ago, denounced Bruno, the "bravest of the brave," as a coward.

The church murdered him, and the pope maligned his memory. Fagot and falsehood—two weapons of the church.

A little while ago a few men began to examine rocks and soils, mountains, islands, reefs and seas. They noticed the valleys and deltas that had been formed by rivers, the many strata of lava that had been changed to soil, the vast deposits of metals and coal, the immense reefs that the coral had formed, the work of glaciers in the far past, the production of soil by the disintegration of rock, by the growth and decay of vegetation and the countless evidences of the countless ages through which the Earth has passed. The geologists read the history of the world written by wave and flame, attested by fossils, by the formation of rocks, by mountain ranges, by volcanoes, by rivers, islands, continents and seas.

The geology of the Bible—of the "divinely inspired" church, of the "infallible" pope, was found to be utterly false and foolish.

The Earth became a witness against the creeds of superstition.

Then came Watt and Galvani with the miracles of steam and electricity, while countless inventors created the wonderful machines that do the work of the

world. Investigation took the place of credulity. Men became dissatisfied with huts and rags, with crusts and creeds. They longed for the comforts, the luxuries of life. The intellectual horizon enlarged, new truths were discovered, old ideas were thrown aside, the brain was developed, the heart civilized and science was born. Humboldt, Laplace and hundreds of others explained the phenomena of nature, called attention to the ancient and venerable mistakes of sanctified ignorance and added to the sum of knowledge. Darwin and Haeckel gave their conclusions to the world. Men began to really think, the myths began to fade, the miracles to grow mean and small, and the great structure, known as theology, fell with a crash.

Science denies the truth of myth and miracle, denies that human testimony can substantiate the miraculous, denies the existence of the supernatural. Science asserts the absolute, the unvarying uniformity of nature. Science insists that the present is the child of all the past, — that no power can change the past, and that nature is forever the same,

The chemist has found that just so many atoms of one kind unite with just so many of another—no

more, no less, always the same. No caprice in chemistry; no interference from without.

The astronomers know that the planets remain in their orbits—that their forces are constant. They know that light is forever the same, always obeying the angle of incidence, traveling with the same rapidity,—casting the same shadow, under the same circumstances in all worlds. They know that the eclipses will occur at the times foretold—neither hastening nor delaying. They know that the attraction of gravitation is always the same, always in perfect proportion to mass and distance, neither weaker nor stronger, unvarying forever. They know that the facts in nature cannot be changed or destroyed, and that the qualities of all things are eternal.

The men of science know that the atomic integrity of the metals is always the same, that each metal is true to its nature and that the particles cling to each other with the same tenacity,—the same force. They have demonstrated the persistence of force, that it is forever active, forever the same, and that it cannot be destroyed.

These great truths have revolutionized the thought of the world.

Every art, every employment, all study, all exper-

iment, the value of experience, of judgment, of hope, all rest on a belief in the uniformity of nature, on the eternal persistence and indestructibility of force.

Break one link in the infinite chain of cause and effect, and the Master of Nature appears. The broken link would become the throne of a god.

The uniformity of Nature denies the supernatural and demonstrates that there is no interference from without. There is no place, no office left for gods. Ghosts fade from the brain and the shrivelled deities fall palsied from their thrones.

The uniformity of Nature renders a belief in "special providence" impossible. Prayer becomes a useless agitation of the air, and religious ceremonies are but motions, pantomimes, mindless and meaningless.

The naked savage, worshiping a wooden god, is the religious equal of the robed pope kneeling before an image of the Virgin. The poor African who carries roots and bark to protect himself from evil spirits is on the same intellectual plane of one who sprinkles his body with "holy water."

All the creeds of Christendom, all the religions of the heathen world are equally absurd. The cathedral, the mosque and the joss house have the same

foundation. Their builders do not believe in the uniformity of Nature, and the business of all priests is to induce a so-called infinite being to change the order of events, to make causes barren of effects and to produce effects without, and in spite of, natural causes. They all believe in the unthinkable and pray for the impossible.

Science teaches us that there was no creation and that there can be no destruction. The infinite denies creation and defies destruction. An infinite person, an "infinite being" is an infinite impossibility. To conceive of such a being is beyond the power of the mind. Yet all religions rest upon the supposed existence of the unthinkable, the inconceivable. And the priests of these religions pretend to be perfectly familiar with the designs, will, and wishes of this unthinkable, this inconceivable.

Science teaches that that which really is has always been, that behind every effect is the efficient and necessary cause, that there is in the universe neither chance nor interference, and that energy is eternal. Day by day the authority of the theologian grows weaker and weaker. As the people become intelligent they care less for preachers and more for teachers. Their confidence in knowledge, in thought

and investigation increases. They are eager to know the discoveries, the useful truths, the important facts made, ascertained and demonstrated by the explorers in the domain of the natural. They are no longer satisfied with the platitudes of the pulpit, and the assertions of theologians. They are losing confidence in the "sacred Scriptures" and in the protecting power and goodness of the supernatural. They are satisfied that credulity is not a virtue and that investigation is not a crime.

Science is the providence of man, the worker of true miracles, of real wonders. Science has "read a little in Nature's infinite book of secrecy." Science knows the circuits of the winds, the courses of the stars. Fire is his servant, and lightning his messenger. Science freed the slaves and gave liberty to their masters. Science taught man to enchain, not his fellows, but the forces of nature, forces that have no backs to be scarred, no limbs for chains to chill and eat, forces that have no hearts to break, forces that never know fatigue, forces that shed no tears. Science is the great physician. His touch has given sight. He has made the lame to leap, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and in the pallid face his hand has set the rose of health. Science has given

his beloved sleep and wrapped in happy dreams the throbbing nerves of pain. Science is the destroyer of disease, builder of happy homes, the preserver of life and love. Science is the teacher of every virtue, the enemy of every vice. Science has given the true basis of morals, the origin and office of conscience, revealed the nature of obligation, of duty, of virtue in its highest, noblest forms, and has demonstrated that true happiness is the only possible good. Science has slain the monsters of superstition, and destroyed the authority of inspired books. Science has read the records of the rocks, records that priestcraft cannot change, and on his wondrous scales has weighed the atom and the star.

Science has founded the only true religion. Science is the only Savior of this world.

VI.

FOR many ages religion has been tried. For countless centuries man has sought for help from heaven. To soften the heart of God, mothers sacrificed their babes! but the God did not hear, did not see, and did not help. Naked savages were devoured by beasts, bitten by serpents, killed by flood and frost. They prayed for help, but their God was deaf. They built temples and altars, employed priests and gave of their substance, but the volcano destroyed and the famine came. For the sake of God millions murdered their fellow-men, but the God was silent. Millions of martyrs died for the honor of God, but the God was blind. He did not see the flames, the scaffolds. He did not hear the prayers, the groans. Thousands of priests in the name of God tortured their fellow-men, stretched them on racks, crushed their feet in iron boots, tore out their tongues, extinguished their eyes. The victims implored the protection of God, but their god

did not hear, did not see. He was deaf and blind. He was willing that his enemies should torture his friends.

Nations tried to destroy each other for the sake of God, and the banner of the cross dripping with blood floated over a thousand fields — but the god was silent. He neither knew nor cared. Pestilence covered the earth with dead, the priests prayed, the altars were heaped with sacrifices, but the god did not see, did not hear. The miseries of the world did not lessen the joys of heaven. The clouds gave no rain, the famine came, withered babes with pallid lips sought the breasts of dead mothers, while starving fathers knelt and prayed, but the god did not hear. Through many centuries millions were enslaved, babes were sold from mothers, husbands from wives, backs were scarred with the lash. The poor wretches lifted their clasped hands toward heaven and prayed for justice, for liberty — but their god did not hear. He cared nothing for the sufferings of slaves, nothing for the tears of wives and mothers, nothing for the agony of men. He answered no prayers. He broke no chains. He freed no slaves.

The miserable wretches appealed to the priests of

God, but they were on the other side. They defended the masters. The slaves had nothing to give.

During all these years it was claimed by the theologians that their God was governing the world, that he was infinitely powerful, wise and good — and that the "powers" of the earth were "ordained" by him. During all these years the church was the enemy of progress. It hated all physicians and told the people to rely on prayer, amulets and relics. It persecuted the astronomers and geologists, denounced them as infidels and atheists, as enemies of the human race. It poisoned the fountains of learning and insisted that teachers should distort the facts in nature to the end that they might harmonize with the "inspired" book. During all these years the church misdirected the energies of man, and when it reached the zenith of its power, darkness fell upon the world.

In all nations and in all ages, religion has failed. The gods have never interfered. Nature has produced and destroyed without mercy and without hatred. She has cared no more for man than for the leaves of the forest, no more for nations than for hills of ants, nothing for right or wrong, for life or death, for pain or joy.

Man through his intelligence must protect himself. He gets no help from any other world. The church has always claimed and still claims that it is the only reforming power, that it makes men honest, virtuous and merciful, that it prevents violence and war, and that without its influence the race would return to barbarism.

Nothing can exceed the absurdity of these claims.

If we wish to improve the condition of mankind — if we wish for nobler men and women we must develop the brain, we must encourage thought and investigation. We must convince the world that credulity is a vice, — that there is no virtue in believing without, or against evidence, and that the really honest man is true to himself. We must fill the world with intellectual light. We must applaud mental courage. We must educate the children, rescue them from ignorance and crime. School-houses are the real temples, and teachers are the true priests. We must supply the wants of the mind, satisfy the hunger of the brain. The people should be familiar with the great poets, with the tragedies of Æschylus, the dramas of Shakespeare, with the poetry of Homer and Virgil. Shakespeare should be taught in every school, found in every house.

Through photography the whole world may become acquainted with the great statues, the great paintings, the victories of art. In this way the mind is enlarged, the sympathies quickened, the appreciation of the beautiful intensified, the taste refined and the character ennobled.

The great novels should be read by all. All should be acquainted with the men and women of fiction, with the ideal world. The imagination should be developed, trained and strengthened. Superstition has degraded art and literature. It gave us winged monsters, scenes from heaven and hell, representations of gods and devils, sculptured the absurd and painted the impossible in the name of Art. It gave us the dreams of the insane, the lives of fanatical saints, accounts of miracles and wonders, of cures wrought by the bones of the dead, descriptions of Paradise, purgatory and the eternal dungeon, discourses on baptism, on changing wine and wafers into the the blood and flesh of God, on the forgiveness of sins by priests, on fore-ordination and accountability, predestination and free will, on devils, ghosts and goblins, the ministrations of guardian angels, the virtue of belief and the wickedness of doubt. And this was called "sacred literature."

The church taught that those who believed, counted beads, mumbled prayers, and gave their time or property for the support of the gospel were the good and that all others were traveling the "broad road" to eternal pain. According to the theologians, the best people, the saints, were dead, and real beauty was to be found only in heaven. They denounced the joys of life as husks and filthy rags, declared that the world had been cursed, and that it brought forth thistles and thorns because of the sins of man. They regarded the earth as a kind of dock, running out into the sea of eternity,—on which the pious waited for the ship on which they were to be transported to another world.

But the real poets and the real artists clung to this world, to this life. They described and represented things that exist. They expressed thoughts of the brain, emotions of the heart, the griefs and joys, the hope and despair of men and women. They found strength and beauty on every hand. They found their angels here. They were true to human experience and they touched the brain and heart of the world. In the tragedies and comedies of life, in the smiles and tears, in the ecstasies of love, in the darkness of death, in the dawn of hope, they found

their materials for statue and song, for poem and painting. Poetry and art are the children of this world, born and nourished here. They are human. They have left the winged monsters of heaven, the malicious deformities of hell, and have turned their attention to men and women, to the things of this life.

There is a poem called "The Skylark," by Shelley, graceful as the motions of flames. Another by Robert Burns, called "The Daisy," exquisite, perfect as the pearl of virtue in the beautiful breast of a loving girl. Between this lark and this daisy, neither above nor below, you will find all the poetry of the world. Eloquence, sublimity, poetry and art must have the foundation of fact, of reality. Imaginary worlds and beings are nothing to us.

At last the old creeds are becoming cruel and vulgar. We now have imagination enough to put ourselves in the place of others. Believers in hell, in eternal pain, like murderers, lack imagination. The murderer has not imagination enough to see his victim dead. He does not see the sightless and pathetic eyes. He does not see the widow's arms about the corpse, her lips upon the dead. He does not hear the sobs of children. He does not see the

funeral. He does not hear the clods as they fall on the coffin. He does not feel the hand of arrest, the scene of the trial is not before him. He does not hear the awful verdict, the sentence of the court, the last words. He does not see the scaffold, nor feel about his throat the deadly noose.

Let us develop the brain, civilize the heart, and give wings to the imagination.

VII.

IF we abandon myth and miracle, if we discard the supernatural and the scheme of redemption, how are we to civilize the world?

Is falsehood a reforming power? Is credulity the mother of virtue? Is there any saving grace in the impossible and absurd? Did wisdom perish with the dead? Must the civilized accept the religion of savages?

If we wish to reform the world we must rely on truth, on fact, on reason. We must teach men that they are good or bad for themselves, that others cannot be good or bad for them, that they cannot be charged with the crimes, or credited with the virtues of others. We must discard the doctrine of the atonement, because it is absurd and immoral. We are not accountable for the sins of "Adam" and the virtues of Christ cannot be transferred to us. There can be no vicarious virtue, no vicarious vice. Why should the sufferings of the inno-

cent atone for the crimes of the guilty. According to the doctrine of the atonement right and wrong do not exist in the nature of things, but in the arbitrary will of the Infinite. This is a subversion of all ideas of justice and mercy.

An act is good, bad, or indifferent, according to its consequences. No power can step between an act and its natural consequences. A governor may pardon the criminal, but the natural consequences of the crime remain untouched. A god may forgive, but the consequences of the act forgiven, are still the same. We must teach the world that the consequences of a bad action cannot be avoided, that they are the invisible police, the unseen avengers, that accept no gifts, that hear no prayers, that no cunning can deceive.

We do not need the forgiveness of gods, but of ourselves and the ones we injure. Restitution without repentance is far better than repentance without restitution.

We know nothing of any god who rewards, punishes or forgives.

We must teach our fellow-men that honor comes from within, not from without, that honor must be earned, that it is not alms, that even an infinite God

could not enrich the beggar's palm with the gem of honor.

Teach them also that happiness is the bud, the blossom and the fruit of good and noble actions, that it is not the gift of any god; that it must be earned by man — must be deserved.

In this world of ours there is no magic, no sleight-of-hand, by which consequences can be made to punish the good and reward the bad.

Teach men not to sacrifice this world for some other, but to turn their attention to the natural, to the affairs of this life. Teach them that theology has no known foundation, that it was born of ignorance and fear, that it has hardened the heart, polluted the imagination and made fiends of men.

Theology is not for this world. It is no part of real religion. It has nothing to do with goodness or virtue. Religion does not consist in worshiping gods, but in adding to the well-being, the happiness of man. No human being knows whether any god exists or not, and all that has been said and written about "our god," or the gods of other people, has no known fact for a foundation. Words without thoughts, clouds without rain.

Let us put theology out of religion.

Church and state should be absolutely divorced. Priests pretend that they have been selected by, and that they get their power from God. Kings occupy their thrones in accordance with the will of God. The pope declares that he is the agent, the deputy of God and that by right he should rule the world. All these pretentions and assertions are perfectly absurd and yet they are acknowledged and believed by millions. Get theology out of government and kings will descend from their thrones. All will admit that governments get their powers from the consent of the governed, and that all persons in office are the servants of the people. Get theology out of government and chaplains will be dismissed from Legislatures, from Congress, from the army and navy. Get theology out of government and people will be allowed to express their honest thoughts about "inspired books" and superstitious creeds. Get theology out of government and priests will no longer steal a seventh of our time. Get theology out of government and the clergy will soon take their places with augurs and soothsayers, with necromancers and medicine-men.

Get theology out of education. Nothing should be taught in a school that somebody does not know.

There are plenty of things to be learned about this world, about this life. Every child should be taught to think, and that it is dangerous not to think. Children should not be taught the absurdities, the cruelties and imbecilities of superstition. No church should be allowed to control the common school, and public money should not be divided between the hateful and warring sects. The public school should be secular, and only the useful should be taught. Many of our colleges are under the control of churches. Presidents and professors are mostly ministers of the gospel and the result is that all facts inconsistent with the creeds are either suppressed or denied. Only those professors who are naturally stupid or mentally dishonest can retain their places. Those who tell the truth, who teach the facts, are discharged.

In every college truth should be a welcome guest. Every professor should be a finder, and every student a learner, of facts. Theology and intellectual dishonesty go together. The teacher of children should be intelligent and perfectly sincere.

Let us get theology out of education.

The pious denounce the secular schools as godless. They should be. The sciences are all secular, all godless. Theology bears the same relation to science

that the black art does to chemistry, that magic does to mathematics. It is something that cannot be taught, because it cannot be known. It has no foundation in fact. It neither produces, nor accords with, any image in the mind. It is not only unknowable but unthinkable. Through hundreds and thousands of generations men have been discussing, wrangling and fighting about theology. No advance has been made. The robed priest has only reached the point from which the savage tried to start.

We know that theology always has and always will make enemies. It sows the seeds of hatred in families and nations. It is selfish, cruel, revengeful and malicious. It has heaven for the few and perdition for the many. We now know that credulity is not a virtue and that intellectual courage is. We must stop rewarding hypocrisy and bigotry. We must stop persecuting the thinkers, the investigators, the creators of light, the civilizers of the world.

VIII.

WILL the unknown, the mysteries of life and death, the world that lies beyond the limitations of the mind, forever furnish food for superstition? Will the gods and ghosts perish or simply retreat before the advancing hosts of science, and continue to crouch and lurk just beyond the horizon of the known? Will darkness forever be the womb and mother of the supernatural?

A little while ago priests told peasants that the New Jerusalem, the celestial city was just above the clouds. They said that its walls and domes and spires were just beyond the reach of human sight. The telescope was invented and those who looked at the wilderness of stars, saw no city, no throne. They said to the priests: "Where is your New Jerusalem?" The priests cheerfully and confidently replied. "It is just beyond where you see."

At one time it was believed that a race of men existed "with their heads beneath their shoulders." Returning travelers from distant lands were asked

about these wonderful people and all replied that they had not seen them. "Oh," said the believers in the monsters, "the men with heads beneath their shoulders live in a country that you did not visit." And so the monsters lived and flourished until all the world was known. We cannot know the universe. We cannot travel infinite distances, and so, somewhere in shoreless space there will always be room for gods and ghosts, for heavens and hells. And so it may be that superstition will live and linger until the world becomes intelligent enough to build upon the foundation of the known, to keep the imagination within the domain of the probable, and to believe in the natural—*until the supernatural shall have been demonstrated.*

Savages knew all about gods, about heavens and hells before they knew anything about the world in which they lived. They were perfectly familiar with evil spirits, with the invisible phantoms of the air, long before they had any true conception of themselves. So, they knew all about the origin and destiny of the human race. They were absolutely certain about the problems, the solution of which, philosophers know, is beyond the limitations of the mind. They understood astrology, but not astron-

omy, knew something of magic, but nothing about chemistry. They were wise only as to those things about which nothing can be known.

The poor Indian believed in the "Great Spirit" and saw "design" on every hand.—Trees were made that he might have bows and arrows, wood for his fire and bark for his wigwam — rivers and lakes to give him fish, wild beasts and corn that he might have food, and the animals had skins that he might have clothes.

Primitive peoples all reasoned in the same way, and modern Christians follow their example. They knew but little of the world and thought that it had been made expressly for the use of man. They did not know that it was mostly water, that vast regions were locked in eternal ice and that in most countries the conditions were unfavorable to human life. They knew nothing of the countless enemies of man that live unseen in water, food and air. Back of the little good they knew they put gods and back of the evil, devils. They thought it of the greatest importance to gain the good will of the gods, who alone could protect them from the devils. Those who worshiped these gods, offered sacrifices, and obeyed priests, were considered loyal members of the tribe

or community, and those who refused to worship were regarded as enemies and traitors. The believers, in order to protect themselves from the anger of the gods, exiled or destroyed the infidels.

Believing as they did, the course they pursued was natural. They not only wished to protect themselves from disease and death, from pestilence and famine in this world but the souls of their children from eternal pain in the next. Their gods were savages who demanded flattery and worship not only, but the acceptance of a certain creed. As long as Christians believe in eternal punishment they will be the enemies of those who investigate and contend for the authority of reason, of those who demand evidence, who care nothing for the unsupported assertions of the dead or the illogical inferences of the living.

Science always has been, is, and always will be modest, thoughtful, truthful. It has but one object: The ascertainment of truth. It has no prejudice, no hatred. It is in the realm of the intellect and cannot be swayed or changed by passion. It does not try to please God, to gain heaven or avoid hell. It is for this world, for the use of man. It is per-

fectly candid. It does not try to conceal, but to reveal. It is the enemy of mystery, of pretence and cant. It does not ask people to be solemn, but sensible. It calls for and insists on the use of all the senses, of all the faculties of the mind. It does not pretend to be "holy" or "inspired." It courts investigation, criticism and even denial. It asks for the application of every test, for trial by every standard. It knows nothing of blasphemy and does not ask for the imprisonment of those who ignorantly or knowingly deny the truth. The good that springs from a knowledge of the truth is the only reward it offers, and the evil resulting from ignorance is the only punishment it threatens. Its effort is to reform the world through intelligence.

On the other hand theology is, always has been, and always will be, ignorant, arrogant, puerile and cruel. When the church had power, hypocrisy was crowned and honesty imprisoned. Fraud wore the tiara and truth was a convict. Liberty was in chains, Theology has always sent the worst to heaven, the best to hell.

Let me give you a scene from the day of judgment. Christ is upon his throne, his secretary by

his side. A soul appears. This is what happens —

"What is your name?"

Torquemada.

"Were you a Christian?"

I was.

"Did you endeavor to convert your fellow-men?"

I did. I tried to convert them by persuasion, by preaching and praying and even by force.

"What did you do?"

I put the heretics in prison, in chains. I tore out their tongues, put out their eyes, crushed their bones, stretched them upon racks, roasted their feet, and if they remained obdurate I flayed them alive or burned them at the stake.

"And did you do all this for my glory?"

Yes, all for you. I wanted to save some, I wanted to protect the young and the weak minded.

"Did you believe the Bible, the miracles — that I was God, that I was born of a virgin and kept money in the mouth of a fish?"

Yes, I believed it all. My reason was the slave of faith.

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou

into the joys of thy Lord. I was hungry and you gave me meat, naked and you clothed me."

Another soul arises.

"What is your name?"

Giordano Bruno.

"Were you a Christian?"

At one time I was, but for many years I was a philosopher, a seeker after truth.

"Did you seek to convert your fellow-men?"

Not to Christianity, but to the religion of reason. I tried to develop their minds, to free them from the slavery of ignorance and superstition. In my day the church taught the holiness of credulity — the virtue of unquestioning obedience, and in your name tortured and destroyed the intelligent and courageous. I did what I could to civilize the world, to make men tolerant and merciful, to soften the hearts of priests, and banish torture from the world. I expressed my honest thoughts and walked in the light of reason.

"Did you believe the Bible, the miracles? Did you believe that I was God, that I was born of a virgin and that I suffered myself to be killed by the Jews to appease the wrath of God—that is, of myself — so that God could save the souls of a few?"

"No, I did not. I did not believe that God was ever born into my world, or that God learned the trade of a carpenter, or that he "increased in knowledge," or that he cast devils out of men, or that his garments could cure diseases, or that he allowed himself to be murdered, and in the hour of death "forsook" himself. These things I did not and could not believe. But I did all the good I could. I enlightened the ignorant, comforted the afflicted, defended the innocent, divided even my poverty with the poor, and did the best I could to increase the happiness of my fellow-men. I was a soldier in the army of progress.—I was arrested, imprisoned, tried and convicted by the church—by the "Triumphant Beast." I was burned at the stake by ignorant and heartless priests and my ashes given to the winds.

Then Christ, his face growing dark, his brows contracted with wrath, with uplifted hands, with half averted face, cries or rather shrieks: "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

This is the justice of God—the mercy of the compassionate Christ. This is the belief, the dream and hope of the orthodox theologian—"the consummation devoutly to be wished."

Theology makes God a monster, a tyrant, a savage; makes man a servant, a serf, a slave; promises heaven to the obedient, the meek, the frightened, and threatens the self-reliant with the tortures of hell.

It denounces reason and appeals to the passions — to hope and fear. It does not answer the arguments of those who attack, but resorts to sophistry, falsehood and slander. It is incapable of advancement. It keeps its back to the sunrise, lives on myth and miracle, and guards with a miser's care the "sacred" superstitions of the past.

In the great struggle between the supernatural and the natural, between gods and men, we have passed midnight. All the forces of civilization, all the facts that have been found, all the truths that have been discovered are the allies of science — the enemies of the supernatural.

We need no myths, no miracles, no gods, no devils.

IX.

FOR thousands of generations the myths have been taught and the miracles believed. Every mother was a missionary and told with loving care the falsehoods of "faith" to her babe. The poison of superstition was in the mother's milk. She was honest and affectionate and her character, her goodness, her smiles and kisses, entered into, mingled with, and became a part of the superstition that she taught. Fathers, friends and priests united with the mothers, and the children thus taught, became the teachers of their children and so the creeds were kept alive.

Childhood loves the romantic, the mysterious, the monstrous. It lives in a world where cause has nothing to do with effect, where the fairy waves her hand and the prince appears. Where wish creates the thing desired and facts become the slaves of amulet and charm. The individual lives the life of the race, and the child is charmed with what the race in its infancy produced.

There seems to be the same difference between mistakes and facts that there is between weeds and corn. Mistakes seem to take care of themselves, while the facts have to be guarded with all possible care. Falsehoods like weeds flourish without care. Weeds care nothing for soil or rain. They not only ask no help but they almost defy destruction. In the minds of children, superstitions, legends, myths and miracles find a natural, and in most instances a lasting home. Thrown aside in manhood, forgotten or denied, in old age they oft return and linger to the end.

This in part accounts for the longevity of religious lies. Ministers with clasped hands and uplifted eyes ask the man who is thinking for himself how he can be wicked and heartless enough to attack the religion of his mother. This question is regarded by the clergy as unanswerable. Of course it is not to be asked by the missionaries, of the Hindus and the Chinese. The heathen are expected to desert the religion of their mothers as Christ and his apostles deserted the religion of their mothers. It is right for Jews and heathen, but not for thinkers and philosophers.

A cannibal was about to kill a missionary for food.

The missionary objected and asked the cannibal how he could be so cruel and wicked.

The cannibal replied that he followed the example of his mother. "My mother," said he, "was good enough for me. Her religion is my religion. The last time I saw her she was sitting, propped up against a tree, eating cold missionary."

But now the mother argument has mostly lost its force, and men of mind are satisfied with nothing less than truth.

The phenomena of nature have been investigated and the supernatural has not been found. The myths have faded from the imagination, and of them nothing remains but the poetic. The miraculous has become the absurd, the impossible. Gods and phantoms have been driven from the earth and sky. We are living in a natural world.

Our fathers, some of them, demanded the freedom of religion. We have taken another step. We demand the Religion of Freedom.

O Liberty, thou art the god of my idolatry! Thou art the only deity that hateth bended knees. In thy vast and unwalled temple, beneath the roofless dome, star-gemmed and luminous with suns, thy worshipers stand erect! They do not cringe, or crawl, or bend

their foreheads to the earth. The dust has never borne the impress of their lips. Upon thy altars mothers do not sacrifice their babes, nor men their rights. Thou askest naught from man except the things that good men hate — the whip, the chain, the dungeon key. Thou hast no popes, no priests, who stand between their fellow-men and thee. Thou carest not for foolish forms, or selfish prayers. At thy sacred shrine hypocrisy does not bow, virtue does not tremble, superstition's feeble tapers do not burn, but Reason holds aloft her inextinguishable torch whose holy light will one day flood the world.

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